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WESTERN AMERICANA

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THE RAMBLER.

L. AND J. SEELEY, WESTON GREEN, THAMES DITTON, SURREY.

THE RAMBLER

IN

NORTH AMERICA:

MDCCCXXXII.—MDCCCXXXIII.

BY CHARLES JOSEPH LATROBE,

AUTHOR OF THE 'ALPENSTOCK,' ETC.

> CŒLUM, NON ANIMUM MUTANT QUI TRANS MARE CURRUNT.
>
> HOR. EPIST.

VOL. I.

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86. **LATROBE, CHARLES J.** The Rambler in North America. Two vols. in 1. 12mo, ¾ mor., chipped. N. Y., 1835. $12.50

1041 **Latrobe** (Charles Joseph) The Rambler in North America, 1832-33, *second edition, folding map*, 2 vols, 8vo., half morocco, £1 10s 1836

One of the pioneer books of Western travel. Latrobe made one journey with the Washington Irving party through the Osage Country down to the Arkansas, which is related in this work, as well as in the "Tour on the Prairies." In 1833 Latrobe also made a journey to Prairie du Chien.

It is only in the second edition that the map was issued. Wagner 48.

TO

WASHINGTON IRVING, ESQ.

THESE VOLUMES

ARE

INSCRIBED

IN TOKEN OF AFFECTIONATE ESTEEM

AND REMEMBRANCE.

BY

THE AUTHOR.

480 LATROBE (CHARLES JOSEPH). The Rambler in North America, 1932-33. 2 vols., 12mo, original cloth, paper labels. New York, 1835. $10.00

First American edition. Wagner-Camp, 48. Latrobe accompanied Washington Irving in his tour of the prairies. Wagner-Camp considers this a much fuller and more entertaining account of the trip than Irving's.

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LETTER I.

To F. B. L.

We have both, by this time, become aware of a melancholy truth. We have both seen, that, however a common lot may be awarded to the young members of a family in early life; to whatever degree a common education may strengthen the natural affection implanted in their bosoms—blend together their youthful associations, and form their tastes on the same models;—in fine, however potent the spell which pervades their spirits, and seems to unite their hearts indissolubly together—the approach of manhood rarely fails to scatter the little band to the four winds; and the time comes when long periods of separation and absence, though they may not choke a generous interest, or stifle affection, must impair, if not destroy intimacy. Epistolary correspondence may, it is true, offer under most circumstances a partial remedy, and to that we have hitherto had recourse to fill the chasms produced in our intimacy, from having for many years pursued diverging paths. May we never quite neglect it!

You may recollect, that when boys at school, I seemed, as you were my junior, to have a certain natural right to stretch the sceptre of patronage over you. When fatigued of looking up to my two elder brothers as models of scarcely attainable perfection and wisdom, it was encouraging to turn and cast a glance of complacency on you, with the reflection, that in your eyes at least, I must appear a personage of equally superior intelligence. At this later day the doubt may well occur to me, whether the two or three years by which I was your senior, had in fact given me a very decided advantage over you in moral and physical alertness or power. This however I keep in remembrance, that you certainly looked up to me with a far greater degree of respect than I merited, and with a degree of affection, which, whatever may have been the fate of the former sentiment, has in no degree been diminished by added years, different pursuits, and long terms of separation.

But it may be admitted, that even at the present day, when both are well advanced in manhood, there still exists a certain weakness in my manner of looking upon you. When addressing you as at the present time, I persuade myself that in your breast at least, there are sentiments which will prove far stronger than the spirit of criticism. Moreover, I am still, without fear of contradiction, a few years older, and if I dare presume to instruct and amuse any one, it may be yourself. In this spirit I take up my pen to reply to your last letter.

You say you continue to be interested in every step I take, and feel curiosity to follow me through the scenes which have been presented to my view on the opposite shores of the Atlantic. I will try to answer your interest, and satisfy your curiosity, and as far as circumstances allow, to give you a history of what my comrade and myself have seen, achieved, or suffered for some time past. A period of tranquil and sedentary existence has succeeded to a long term of travel and constant activity, and a portion of its hours cannot, perhaps, be employed to better purpose.

I might, it is true, as an alternative, send you a portmanteau, full of papers of all descriptions, printed and manuscript, which, in spite of many efforts to the contrary, has been added to my travelling equipage, and, generously telling you that they contain no secrets, bid you pick and choose, and burn or read, as you may feel inclined. But in so acting, I should do you no justice, and myself perhaps yet less.

I may be mistaken in my estimate of your peculiar taste, and in my judgment as to that part of the heap which would be most in accordance with it. Tastes differ. I received a letter while in America, from a common friend of ours, one worthy of both attention and esteem, and one whom I should be proud to oblige. It was in return to one of mine, which I had closed with a well-meant inquiry, whether I could be of any service to him. The following is an extract from the reply. 'We have had plenty of descriptions of the American House of Representatives, the President's Levee. Tell me how the poor are provided for;—what sort of people are the overseers:—have they vestry meetings for the relief of the poor? How are the workhouses arranged and regulated? What is the bill of fare in such places? What do the inmates cost per head? Are they farmed or not? Is there any remnant of a religious establishment? Railways, are they increasing? Do they pay or not?' and so forth; the whole concluding with this pithy piece of advice, 'let your letters, in short, be about men, and not about mountains, and let them inform me of what I have never heard, not what has been presented to the world a hundred times before.'

What do you say to this? It was, in my humble opinion, treating a gentleman in search of the picturesque, no better than a church-warden. There was the advantage of having a political economist for a correspondent! In you I have, at any rate, the comfort of believing that I may indulge in less prosaic and less matter-of-fact subjects. He might as well have required me to furnish him with a set of essays upon the casuistical divinity of the middle ages; and well it is for you, that I know how to interpret your expressions of curiosity, or you might fare as ill as R. who to this day has never received an answer to his queries, though I was far from being indisposed to gratify him, had I been able. Had he asked me to give him intelligence about geological phenomena, the courses of rivers, the Indian tribes; to inform him which was the most approved mode of hunting a bear, or catching a racoon, I should have known to whom to apply, and how to obtain the necessary knowledge; but about poor-rates and poor-houses, the rent of pews, and the success of the voluntary system, I never could get any but the most vague and partial intelligence.

I asked one gentleman for example, how the poor of his town were provided for? He answered promptly, 'Poor, Sir? we have none.' Of course all the succeeding queries which I was fully prepared to put, fell to the ground. In other places, I perhaps fared better, and found that there were absolutely poor people, and did not fail to make notes of all the information I gleaned. But I soon grew tired of my quest on this and other like points of interest, and the prosaic company into which it introduced me; and more than all, of the endless shades of distinction in the systems under trial, among a people spread over such a vast extent of country, and under such very different circumstances. This led me to change my mode of proceeding. I got possession of all the books and pamphlets, right and left, which appeared to shed light, or to bear upon these and similar subjects of general interest, and these are all at your service, and especially at that of our worthy friend. Therefore, when you see him, pray tell him so, but advise him not to apply to me either by letter or orally for such information.

Our brief period of intercourse in town during the winter of 1831-2, made you aware of the principal objects of my proposed visit to the United States of America; and also of the feelings which predominated in the anticipation of it.

Whatever natural regrets were involved in a departure from Europe, there was little but pleasure in anticipation. Without a feeling of satiety, much less of disgust to spur me forward, I was content to turn my back for a season on the society and scenery of the Old World; and looked forward with a sensation of undefined pleasure and curiosity to those western climes, whose characteristics were so different from any I had yet seen. I longed to wander among the details of that sublime scenery which the fancy associates with the New World, as so peculiarly her own: her wide-spread streams—interminable forests and foaming cataracts; and to be a guest in the lodges of that race, of whom men speak as doomed speedily to disappear from the face of the earth.

I desired to follow into their places of refuge and retreat, the crowd of human beings which the last two centuries had sent in annual swarms upon the pathway opened across the great western waters by the constancy and patient daring of Columbus;—men of all nations, of all ranks and degrees, those of unsullied purity of life and character, and others who were steeped to the lips in crime;—the patriot, the dreamer after Utopian schemes of happiness or liberty;—men goaded by political and religious persecution;—the disappointed in heart and purpose,—hundreds incited by speculation, thousands by poverty;—the tens of thousands who having all to hope and nothing to lose, had disappeared from the countries of the East, had gone and seemingly buried themselves under the deep shade of the western forest, or beneath the tall grass of the western prairie.

Preparatory to this visit, my efforts were more negative than positive; by which expression is meant, that I attempted to keep my imagination and my mind unbiassed and uninfluenced by preconceived notions, from whatever source they might be drawn, rather than, by reading the works, or listening to the opinions of preceding travellers, to run the hazard of adding the prejudices of others to my own. As a foreigner, and above all an Englishman, about to travel in a country, where comparison would force itself on the mind at every turn, it was to be feared that there were obstacles already existing in my own bosom, in the way of forming a sound unbiassed judgment of men and things. Education, habit, political bias and tastes might all be arrayed on the opposite side, even supposing there were an absence of violent and uncontrollable prejudice. For the rest I flattered myself, that I had some advantages to counter-balance the great disadvantage of being born within the sound of Bow Bells. I laid some claim to the character of an old traveller; having seen divers countries besides my own. Difficulties and asperities which might disgust others from their novelty, might not work with equal effect on the temper of one, whose European rambles had made him pretty fully acquainted with both the rough and the smooth passages of a traveller's life. Providential circumstances had, as you are aware, prepared for me a home, and a place in society, as long as I should remain in America. I was, as you may recollect, no very violent politician; and was inclined, whether from natural indolence, or dull good nature, to allow a very considerable diversity of opinion in my neighbour, as long as he took care not to contradict me. I had seen enough of mankind in divers countries, to believe that no system of government is of general application, and that the government must be made to suit the people, and not the people to suit the government. I loved my own country and its institutions better than any other on the face of the earth, and had no fear of giving a preference to any other, however its peculiar advantages might excite my admiration: and I need hardly add, that no change has been wrought in this feeling, in which I hope to live and die. I possessed in my friend and your acquaintance, young Count de Pourtales, a cheerful and accomplished travelling companion, who, I believe, was bent like myself on forming opinions from observation. We wished to indentify ourselves as much as possible for the time being, with the feelings of the people we were going to visit; and as long as we were among them, to try to feel with them as far as it was reasonable to do so. Lastly, I resolved that nothing should tempt me into the manufacture of a book, a resolution which I have magnanimously maintained to this moment.

And now I still ask your patience, not while I make promises as to what I intend to do, but rather while I warn you as to certain things which you must not expect from me. Take my letters for what they are worth. If you find it a trouble to read them, be sure that it has cost me yet more to write them; and, moreover, if you find me at any time particularly dull, as some one has said before me, be sure that I have a design in it.

It is not my intention in a general way to give you descriptions of places and scenes described a thousand times. You will not look to me for elaborate sketches and dissertations on transatlantic politics, for I am quite ready to own my poverty of satisfactory information on that head. Virulence of party, with all its concomitants of misrepresentation, falsification, and personality, is found within the United States in as great a degree as within the bounds of Britain; and leaves little for a stranger like myself to do, after attempting to pry into the state of politics in America, whether by means of the public prints, or of private inquiry, than to turn away with mingled disgust and despair.

You must not expect pages of statistical information;—relations of stage-coach, steam-boat, and taproom colloquies with Captain *This* or Judge *That*; anecdotes abounding in slang, and stories at second-hand; much less, sly peeps into the interior of families who may have exercised the rites of hospitality towards the stranger.

As to the first you may find them elsewhere; and moreover, however correct at the time I might have procured them, they would probably be erroneous by the time you might wish to draw deductions from them. The second and third have now neither novelty nor good taste to recommend them; and as to the last, you may miss a great deal of egregious amusement, but I respect myself, even if I did not love my neighbour, too much, ever to repay the confiding hospitality of private families by such cold-blooded displays of disloyalty.

I have been now for ten years, more or less, a wanderer; and if any man should have learned to revere hospitality and have entertained a horror of the term, 'ungrateful guest,' surely I should be that man. There is something in the warm, unchecked, and open-hearted conduct of a family circle, which should ever prevent the stranger from judging what he there witnesses with a cold eye and heart as though he had nothing in common with it. Modern philosophy, it is true, finds an apology for this, but what is that to you or me.

As to the rest, common sense and common reflection will show you, the more you see of human society, high or low, at home or abroad, that there exists scarcely any modification of it that has not its '*ridicules.*' Few, if any, are regulated by such unquestionable laws of good sense and propriety in every particular, as not to give legitimate cause for ridicule. Every one affords matter for caricature. None is so perfect that the satirist and the cynic may not see abundant occasion for a sneer; and moreover, at the present day, a greater degree of neglect and contempt will frequently be awarded to any ignorance of, or deviation from rules, fancies, and fashions, the adoption of which is but conventional and capricious, than to absolute departures from moral rectitude, and sound principle.

I regret my prefatory epistle has proved so long, but I now bring it to a decent conclusion.

LETTER II.

You are aware when and how I left London for Paris in March 1832; having, in consequence of the appearance of the Cholera in England, determined to set sail from a French port in preference to an English one. You will doubtless remember also, how at the very outset, I found myself entrapped with a whole steamboat load of my migratory fellow countrymen, by our French neighbours at Calais, and that we were cooped up in durance vile, to perform unwilling quarantine in an old dilapidated Fort without the town walls, in spite of reiterated protestations and expostulations of '*Mais, Monsieur, je ne suis pas cholérique! Mais, Monsieur, ma femme et moi sommes très pressés!*' *&c.* There is something ludicrous, as well as vexatious, in disappointment, and there were certain among us, who did not fail to extract a good deal of amusement from the unquestionably disagreeable position into which we found ourselves suddenly transported, and which we had subsequently to endure for three long days.

I might amuse you with sundry pictures of men and manners as they then moved before me; rejoicing your English heart with sly remarks upon our Gallic neighbours. I might tell you how, on our approach to the wharf, the French craft, great and small, and the rogues in them, got out of our way, as if we had been a fire-ship; how busily fumigation was carried on by a bunch of sanatory officers, peering out of a temporary hut, while, baboon-like, they made a cat's-paw of a poor doctor; how we were given over by the medical authority to the civil—by the civil to the military—and finally handed over to no authority at all, but shut up pell-mell in the old dismantled fort, to live or die, as it might happen, under the protection of the yellow flag. I might describe the miserable state of all within the forlorn enclosure: how rude barracks of boards formed the sole accommodation,—and how for these we were indebted to the pestilence-defying cupidity of the hotel-keepers of the town alone, the government having provided absolutely no shelter. These huts were capable of housing but thirty out of the hundred sufferers of all ranks, shut up together, and were, of course, filled to suffocation. It would excite your commiseration to learn, how 'first come,' was 'first served,' while the rest had to lie on the grass of the ramparts, under the lee of the counterscarp, or where ever they could; how moreover it rained:—how where the rats gamboled in long undisturbed possession five days before, milor and milady were now glad to lay their dainty heads. The scramble for beds was only equalled by the scramble for board. Sorrow, but not surprise, might be elicited on reading that some of my wise-headed countrymen insulted the health-inspecting dignitaries at their noon-tide visit, threatened an appeal to the British government, for the national outrage perpetrated on our sacred persons, and that in consequence the time of sorrow was lengthened instead of abridged. You would have been amused to see our motley band of men and women, of all nations and degrees, English, French, Belgians, and Americans: and you would have marvelled to hear how the English maundered, grumbled, and groaned together; to see the Belgians play at dominoes and chuck-farthing from morning to night; to listen to the French singing, smoking, and jesting, repeating constantly '*à la guerre comme à la guerre;*' and lastly to watch the American lie from morning to night on his back in the straw, abstracted and speculative, with the rain dropping into his ears.

Moreover, I might tell you how my post was upon the seaward bastion; overlooking the comic scene of petty misery and amusement on one side, and, on the other, the troubled Straits, and the long, white sea-wall of my own land, and show you how many a warm and anxious thought winged its way thither—but all this is foreign to my present purpose.

The same observation will apply to any detailed notice of my release—journey to Paris—sojourn there—and final departure with M. de Pourtales from the port of Havre de Grace, in the second week in April, in company with Washington Irving, our future companion in many a day's adventure.

A voyage to America is no longer a circumstance worth signalizing as a marvel. It is, as you know, literally an every-day occurrence. Hundreds, nay thousands of white sails now bespangle that wide, blue and restless ocean, which, a few centuries ago, was, in truth, a solitary sea; and, though I write to one who was never yet out of the limits of the British Isles, I cannot persuade myself that a sheet full of extracts from 'my log' will add much either to his amusement or instruction. The Havre, such was the name of the stout New-York packet-ship in which we sailed, was a fine vessel, in no whit inferior to the others of her class, in build, or in the commodious arrangements of her interior. She was commanded by a high-spirited, generous-hearted, gentlemanly seaman. He was one whose character could not fail to impress the mind favourably with regard to the service and land to which he belonged. He was accused, but wrongfully I think, of having a tendency, in sailor's phrase, to 'spin a long yarn' now and then, or, in other words, to exaggerate. You may contrive to swallow a tale of considerable size at sea. We were upwards of two hundred on board, and of these, one hundred and seventy were steerage passengers.

You will doubtless know that on a prosperous passage,—and such in fact we had, though not a quick or a direct one; adverse winds, and now and then a rough gale, producing a fearful destruction of the ship's crockery, extraordinary sights and events are hardly to be looked for. A week or two was sufficient to k

make us 'au fait,' as to every phase of our position. The ability to read, with any degree of steadiness on ship-board, is not granted to every one, and I must say, that, to me, a voyage is in that respect nearly lost time. The study of character however, both of rational and irrational beings around you, may afford a never-failing source of amusement, and, in this instance was truly such to us.

None of us have forgotten the first mate, little D. a round, fat, good-humoured man—an off-set of the hardy stock of Nantucket, or Martha's vineyard, I forget which —a narrator of incredible stories about whales. He was proud of bearing the same patronymic as a ci-devant president of Yale College. He had scraped a good deal of information together, and had a very laudable desire to add to the stock—was much given to walk the deck, smoke, and philosophize; and was altogether an unexceptionable character, though he owned that he had been bred a quaker, but had clipped his broad-brim and painted it white the day he came of age. The young second mate was a special favourite, and was generally called 'right and left;' because, if he saw any fight among either sailors or steerage passengers, he dashed into it, and before asking a word of explanation, just knocked down the two men nearest him. Names, descriptive of some peculiarity in form or manner, were soon concocted by our little knot of humorists, for all the more noted characters before the mast.

The position of the poor emigrants—men, women and children, Jews, French and Germans, stowed a-midships, was at the best unpleasant. As long as the weather was fine, matters went on tolerably smoothly, and we had then chirrupping and singing enough: but a gale set them all at loggerheads, and rumours of fights and feuds not unfrequently came aft. Three Frenchmen, (Jews and sharpers if they were not maligned,) seemed to be just so many stumbling-blocks to the honest Germans; and even the quality in the great cabin took a spite against them. One of their number, from his oracular and star-bleached countenance, was dubbed Sidrophel, and it was whispered that they conjured up bad and adverse winds. The majority of the steerage passengers were Alsatians and Bavarians, and were speeding, with their little all collected around them, to settle in a new land. They were most of them musically inclined, and when the level beams of the sun began to glance over the bows, they usually gathered in a knot round the mainmast and sang the songs of their native land, which they and theirs had now quitted for ever. Many a pleasant hour did we thus spend, as our vessel was gently heaving beneath us, and pressing towards the setting sun.

Of our more immediate companions, I say nothing: they were in general too well-bred to excite much attention. We had a proportion of females and pretty children among their number, and I add my testimony to that of many, as to the pleasant, chastened, and agreeable air which their presence dispenses on ship-board.

But this is not all—do not think I am going to pass by that most fertile field of harmless amusement, the dumb animals on board, among which we numbered a cow, ass, divers pigs; and a numerous, but daily-decreasing horde of ducks, turkies, geese, and poultry—besides a snappish pointer with two whelps, and a setter; not to forget a tom-cat, several canaries, and last but not least in favour, a mocking-bird.

Tom seldom made his appearance till about nightfall, and then he might be seen skulking slily along, close under the shadow of the spars lashed to the bulwarks, always contriving, however, to retreat if detected. His movements were never quite free from suspicion—and he was no great favourite aft, in spite of its being alleged, in excuse of his vespernal excursions towards our end of the ship, that the mice frequenting our state rooms were his lawful perquisite: and it was soon found that Tom had, in fact, other ends in view. It was remarked that he had taken a particular fancy to haunt the purlieus of the large wicker cage in which our little musical favourite, the mocking bird, was confined—in preference to all the allurements held out to his attention by the plumper denizens of the coop; and he was frequently detected in its immediate vicinity, sitting with an air of great meekness, eyes half shut, and as it were, quite lost to the world in sweet entrancement, while the pretty bird poured forth its melody. But this was all a sham.

He had in faith no more ear for music than the ship's counter, and, in fact. he was twice discovered in the attempt to make a meal of our playmate. The second time the whole cabin was in arms, and Tom received such summary punishment that he never visited the round-house again. We thus secured the merry little songster's safety. The latter was somewhat capricious, but very diverting—sang like the canary, quacked like the duck, chirped and cackled like the poultry, mewed like the cat, and finally tucked his little wings close to his side, and looked up to main-mast-head like the Captain.

I have told you that our voyage was protracted. After long trying to make our way to the northward, we stood to the south of the gulf-stream, and soon exchanged bleak blowing weather and stormy seas, for gentle breezes, blue skies, and tranquil waters.

I cannot forget how pleasingly the monotony of our voyage was broken about the middle of May, by our coming within sight of the Bermudas, that little stepping-stone in the vast ocean between the continents, and how every animate being on board seemed moved with the aspect and atmosphere of the land.

To cut a long voyage and long letter short, I will close by noting the 21st of May as the day when the former ended, by our arriving off Sandy Hook, with the heights of Neversink to the left, Long Island to the right, and the deep outer bay of New York before us; and when the sun set over the land, our ship might be seen with sails furled and anchor a-peak rocking on the threshold of the New World.

The following morning, we advanced with wind and tide through the outer bay and the Narrows, till abreast of the prettiest quarantine ground under the sun, and dropped our anchor off the shore of Staten Island.

In consequence of the casual indisposition of my comrade, it was thought advisable to stay on board the Havre for a few days, instead of accompanying our fellow-passengers to the city : and it is very comprehensible that both curiosity and six weeks imprisonment on board, made me glad to while away a few of the hours of detention in a ramble on the green shores and wooded heights, which were directly in front of our anchorage.

LETTER III.

The New World! You may imagine, but you cannot feel the degree of curiosity with which I first set foot upon it. It may be readily granted that the emotion of interest with which an American steps upon the shores of Europe, must be of a higher character; yet to me, this change of position from countries where the forms of external nature had in a great measure become familiar, and lost the charm of novelty, to another in which she was to appear clothed in a different garb, and develope other phenomena, was nevertheless an epoch in my existence. It was the renewal of youth and boyhood. Many a sensation, to which I had been a stranger for years, returned to the breast after it might have seemed to have left me for ever. I felt all that excess of prying curiosity into the productions of nature, which had been a strong principle of my soul twenty years before, when we used to explore the vallies of the Air, Wharf, and Calder in concert, bring home pockets stuffed with plants and stones, and heads filled with supposed discoveries. Such they were indeed to us. These fresh and natural feelings of excitement, which had been of course weakened or lost, when every object had become familiar, and there were no more discoveries to make, now stimulated me as warmly as ever; and while eagerly examining every tree, shrub, bud, and reptile, that came across my path during my first solitary stroll, I could almost smile at my boyish and buoyant feeling.

The spring had been tardy in appearance, and unfriendly in its character; yet as I rose from the margin of the bay, and surmounted the first slope, covered with the straggling village, the lively green of the enclosures, the blossoming peach, and other trees, and the budding forest were all delightful to the eye after the monotony of the ocean. The scenery presented by the outer Bay of New York is not striking, and however we had been pleased to approach the green shores, and gaze upon the fixed and firm land; we had hardly been able to chime in with the enthusiastic expressions of admiration uttered by our American fellow-passengers, as we sailed up the Bay, at the peculiar beauty of their native country. Yet, when, after an interrupted climb, I gained the highest point of the wooded range above the Narrows, and looked forth upon the wide extended view then spread before me, I did them justice. The knoll upon which I stood rose above the wooded skirts of the hills, and immediately overlooked the Narrows to the right, with its forts and the long, green, cultivated shores of Long Island beyond. To the south-west the eye gained a glimpse, over the back of the Island, of the strait separating it from the main shore of New Jersey, the undulating outline of which formed the horizon in that direction. Directly over the village below, rising with its clean white edifices on the margin of the Bay, you saw spread before you, the capacious inner harbour, with the distant city, and the entrance to the Hudson, stretching far inland in the perspective, a broad expanse of water dotted with innumerable sails. The wind was fair for the passage of the Narrows, and many a noble ship was passing the Quarantine ground, and steering under their white cloud of canvass for the distant outlet into the Ocean, which appeared distinctly to the southward, over the long, low point of Sandy Hook. The features of the landscape, whose mere outlines I have pourtrayed, were quite devoid of boldness of character, but they were such as to impress me greatly.

And it may here be observed, that when exactly two years after, by a singular coincidence, we again entered the same port on returning from Vera Cruz, having in the interval penetrated into every part of the Union, and latterly gazed upon many a scene of tropical and mountain magnificence in Mexico, I was anew constrained to admit the propriety of the epithet 'beautiful,' being attached to the Bay of New York. That is its characteristic, whether the observer looks down upon it from the elevated point I had chosen, or from the neighbourhood of the city. And yet it is difficult to define where the main charm lies. The aspect of the latter is far from being picturesque on a near approach. You see a long line of level wharfs, and slips crowded by endless tiers of shipping, and tall brick warehouses peering over them; a few uninteresting church-steeples rearing themselves from the central parts of the city, which rises so gradually from the water's edge, that, at a distance, it seems to be built on a dead flat. There is neither beauty nor sublimity in such an object. Then the adjacent shores of Long Island, and New Jersey opposite, though well wooded, are not particularly bold; the small low islands scattered over the nearer portions of the Bay, are far from being either well clothed, or dignified by handsome structures; the swelling back of Staten Island, is too distant to form a prominent object in the landscape; still, come from what quarter you may, you are struck with the air of beauty.

Much is doubtless to be attributed to the extreme mellowness and transparency of the atmosphere, which gives colour to every object on land or water. In this, the climate of New York is truly Italian. There is a freshness in the verdure that covers the sloping and gentle shores, a harmony in the outlines,—and above all, there is a life in the aquatic scenery, which I never witnessed elsewhere in an equal degree. An air of gaiety and festal enjoyment, which contrasts singularly with the unholiday appearance of men and things in the interior of the country, reigns on the waters of the bays and rivers in the vicinity of the cities to a surprising degree.

At all times of the tide, at every hour of the day, whatever may be the wind, the Bay and its outlets appear alive with craft and shipping, from the dark mass of the frigate, or line-of-battle ship, which often lay moored abreast of the city, and the colossal steam-boats hourly seen careering over its surface, to the light skilfully-managed wherry of the Whitehaller.

But we will not for the present linger in New York, where I only passed a single week subsequent to landing. This city, and its rivals on the waters of the Atlantic, have been frequently described, and they may therefore be passed over with few remarks.

The acquaintance which my comrade and myself had begun with Mr. Irving at Havre, and cemented on ship-board, was resumed ashore, and led to that series of common projects and common wanderings, which kept us bound together as a trio for the greater part of the summer and autumn of this year. To him all was new again, after seventeen years' absence from his native country.

The month of June was employed in visiting Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, previous to the assumption of our more extended projects for the summer.

The arrangements for public convenience in travelling by steam-boat and rail-road, along the whole line of interior communication, from Rhode Island into the very heart of Virginia, demand the admiration of every stranger, and that of an Englishman more than any other, he being of all travellers, the most impatient and unable to endure the loss of precious time with equanimity. Each of the cities named, though resembling each other in many points, has its own distinctive marks. New York is the most bustling; Philadelphia the most symmetrical; Baltimore the most picturesque; and Washington the most bewildering.

At New York you pass hours with delight under the trees on that beautiful breezy promenade, which the good taste of the citizens has preserved at the extreme point of their island. You follow the example of more illustrious travellers in doing justice to the ample tables of your hotel or friends, not forgetting to pass judgment on rock fish, American oysters, and above all, on shad-fish, if in season. You enjoy many a stroll along the gay and cheerful pavement of Broadway, the principal street, running for miles through the heart of the city, with its handsome edifices, shops, and public buildings. You admire the commodious disposition of the interior of family mansions, with their folding-doors, clean, cool, indian-matted floors, and the groups of pretty faces by which they are adorned. You marvel at the incessant bustle and proofs of flourishing commerce visible in all the narrower streets devoted to business, diverging right and left towards the North and East rivers; and on the crowded slips and wharfs. You step into a steam-boat, and cross over to Brooklyn, or to the Jersey shore, where you may immediately bury yourself in the delicious walks of Hoboken, where the squirrel climbs as free, and apparently as undisturbed among the grape-vines, as in the depths of the forest. You glance up the Hudson, which laves the grassy margin of the promenade, and see him walled in by the perpendicular pallisadoes and green shores of Manhatten Island, covered with sloops and steamers—and own that in your brightest moment of fancy, you never dreamed of the creation of an equally glorious river, or a city whose position is more strongly marked by all those characteristics which are desirable in a great commercial emporium. Returning, you hear the cry of fire, and repair to the scene of disaster, but go home disappointed, because you find that the good people of New York never give a fire a fair chance, but knock down the house to preserve it from the flames. You walk out on a Sunday evening, and are fairly elbowed into the gutter by the broad-spread bonnets and *gigot de mouton* of the sable beauties, who, with their beaux, have then the possession of the pavement.

At Philadelphia, 'the city of Brotherly Love,' you are struck with the regularity of the streets,—their numberless handsome mansions,—the lavish use of white and grey marble,—pleasant avenues and squares,—noble public institutions,—markets,—the abundance of water,—and the general attention to dress visible in every one you meet. As in New York and Baltimore, you are surprised with the great proportion of handsome female faces and delicately moulded forms which crowd the public walks and saloons, like so many sweet fresh May flowers. You make the usual visits right or left, dictated by taste or reverence; including the romantic scene at Fairmount, and the spot where the celebrated treaty was concluded between Penn and the Delawares; and you taste that hospitality and frank unostentatious kindness which, with all their faults, proved or imputed, the American ever offers to a stranger who conducts himself courteously.

At Baltimore, "the city of Monuments," snugly sheltered within its deep bay, and rising from an oblong basin of the Patapsco towards the amphitheatre of wooded hills on the west, you marvel to hear how, from a period of time within the memory of some yet living, the small village of a dozen houses has sprung up into a large capital, overspreading an extended area, abounding with noble public and private edifices, and possessing an increasing commerce with every port under the sun. You admire the neat style of building,—the bustle of the Bay,—the beauty of the shipping,—and the lovely scenery in the environs. You welcome a southern climate in the perfume of many odorous flowers, and, more than all, the delightful society for which Maryland is pre-eminent —frank, polished, and unaffected.

At Washington, 'the city of magnificent Distances,' with the haste and eagerness of a new comer you visit the lions;—ascend to the capitol;—criticise its architecture, whether properly authorised to do so or not,—listen to the proceedings in either House for an hour or two,—pay your respects to the President,—visit the country-seat and grave of our great and good opponent Washington. You plan, but do not execute, an excursion to the Falls of the Potomac,—get more and more bewildered with the study of the city, which seems to have been contrived with an eye for the especial advantage of the hackney coachmen;—get squeezed out of all equanimity at a Presidental levee; —retain your appetite, but lose your patience at a scrambling dinner in Gadsby's Hotel,—and finally, retrace your steps to Baltimore as we did, with a resolution not to return to Washington till there should be a less suffocating heat in the places of public resort, less dust in Pennsylvania avenue, more water in the Tiber, and more elbow-room in the hotels.

I have, however, no hesitation in saying, that our first impressions of America, were every way pleasing, both as to men and things. We saw the country and the society under the best auspices; and the season at which we made our first journey, was also one which naturally incited us to contented enjoyment.

In returning northward, we made a halt of a fortnight in Baltimore and its neighbourhood. Many of the country-seats which stud the environs upon the upland slope, at various points and distances from the city, are singularly well-situated and tastefully arranged; and I look back with unalloyed gratification to the hours spent among them, and the hospitality there enjoyed. Rural fètes are ordinarily given in these villas at this beautiful season of the year, when every tree and shrub appears in its freshest green, and every natural object cites to amusement and recreation.

The numberless white four-petalled flowers of the dog-wood, which we had left, in the latitude of New York, in full beauty, had, it is true, become discoloured, and half hidden by the green foliage which they precede, but the Catalpa was in blossom in the vicinity of the country-seats; the shrubberies were in their beauty, and on the margin of the forest, which generally thickened to the back of these villas, the evening air was perfumed with the rich odour of the Magnolia, whose snow-white blossom peeped out from its covert of glossy leaves. A thousand beautiful trees, either transported from their concealment in the woods, or tastefully preserved for the purposes of ornament, surrounded the lawns in front of the open colonnade.

It was not till my return to Europe, in the height of summer, after a very short passage, that I was struck with the totally different character of the verdure, both of the field and forest, on the two Continents. After the bright sward, and the varied summer foliage of the Western woods, with their great ponderance of light greens, the English landscape seemed to exhibit nothing but evergreens, such was the depth of shade observable in the blue verdure of the rounded and heavy masses of foliage, of our ordinary forest trees, and on the dark and thick meadow grass of our humid climate.

A few hours before sunset, the different visitors generally assembled, by far the greater number consisting of the young and unmarried of both sexes. under the shade of the trees, tables were covered with the delicacies of the season,—among which the delicious fruit, from which these Strawberry Parties took their name, was ordinarily seen in the greatest profusion, with its appropriate concomitants of cream and champaigne. Many an enchanting spectacle of natural beauty and human contentment and pleasure, have I observed spread before me, while sitting in the portico of one of these rural retreats, as the sun sunk slowly to its setting. The view from many of them commanded a wide prospect, to the south-east, over the forests and fine undulating slopes of the country in the direction of the city, whose domes and edifices peered over the woods, or were descried bordering the irregular lake-like divisions of the river. More remote, lay the wider bay of the Patapsco, glistening with white sails, merging far in the distance into the broad Chesapeake; the long promontory of North Point, with its light-houses glistening in the sunshine; and, beyond all, the hardly perceptible thread of gold which marked the utmost limit of the horizon, and the eastern shore of Maryland.

If to this noble view you add as a foreground, the sweet intermingling forest, lawn, and shrubbery in the immediate vicinity of the dwelling, with the gay and graceful groups scattered over it; you would own with me, that you had rarely gazed upon scenes so truly beautiful aud guilelessly cheerful; so animated, so full of innocent pleasure, and so devoid of false glitter and glare, as those presented by the Maryland Strawberry Parties. Later comes the brief but beautiful twilight, with the wailing cry of the whip-poor-will, the flight of the night-hawk, and above all, myriads of fire-flies filling the air with sparks, dancing in the deep shade, or streaming with their intermittent and gentle light among the groups, as they stroll in the open air, or sit in the porticoes.

The frank manners and uncontrolled intercourse between the young people of both sexes, and the confidence with which they are on all occasions left to their own discretion, is one remarkable feature in American society, and one that must strike every European. Unattended as this open confidence has hitherto been, with perhaps the rarest exceptions, by unpleasant results, it is a proof that thus far the society of the New World has an advantage over that of the Old, where circumstances throw such difficulties in the way of most early marriages; where the poison of libertinism is more generally diffused, and where the whole structure of society warrants the most jealous care in the parent, and the utmost caution and reserve on the part of the daughter.

Though compared with future tours, a short excursion we made from Baltimore during this interval, may sink into insignificance; yet as it was the first which led us away to any distance from the coast, it may not inaptly find a corner before I conclude my third sheet to you. This was a visit to the point of rocks on the Potomac, and the village of Harper's Ferry, at the junction of that river with another offspring of the wooded Allegheny, the Shenandoah, which, in the upper part of its course, waters the lovely valley of Virginia. The celebrated rail-road, planned with an object of forming a junction with the waters of the Chesapeake and the Ohio, had then already been carried as far as the Potomac, upwards of seventy miles from the city of Baltimore, and in the first part of its course up the varied and beautiful glen of the Patapsco, presents scenes of great and peculiar beauty.

The spirit with which such gigantic undertakings are conceived, the millions for their prosecution furnished, and the immense works which they render necessary, carried forward by private companies, often without even the assistance of a loan from the State Government, is worthy of great admiration. None is more so than that displayed in the prosecution of the rail-road in question, which is conducted by bridges, viaducts of massive granite, deep excavations, embankments of great extent and height, for seven miles to the entrance of the more confined valley of the Patapsco, through which it subsequently winds, following the curvature of the precipitous and rocky hills on both sides for many miles, till it reaches the dividing-ridge between the waters of that river, and the tributaries of the Potomac. Here, forty miles from the city, you ascend the first inclined plane, of which there are two on each side, and over which you are conducted by a stationary engine. Fourteen miles from the western slope of the planes, the rail-road traverses the Monocacy valley, and a few miles further you see the forested ridges of the Catoctin mountains, and the broad stream of the Potomac opening before you.

At the time we made this excursion, the traffic and the arrangements on this newly-constructed work were in their infancy, a few rude barracks put up here and there in close proximity to the forest, were but slender indications of the changes about to be effected along its line; but long before we quitted the country, a large village with hotels and warehouses had sprung up at the Point of Rocks; the traffic upon the rail-road was incessant; locomotive engines took the place of horse-power; and hamlets sprung up along its line. The natural resources of the country began to be available; the inexhaustible stores of the finest granite, iron-ore, and breccia, which lay on its very path were conveyed to the city; roads sprung up to communicate with it, and it was gradually advancing into the recesses of the Allegheny, side by side with a canal commenced at the city of Washington, with the same ulterior object.

At Harper's Ferry, where the two combined streams before mentioned, have apparently burst their way through the Blue Bridge, as the advanced chain of the many parallel and continuous ridges of the Apalachian series is called, the scenery is deservedly termed romantic. The precipitous and wooded acclivities of the mountains overhang the wide beds of two noble streams, both interrupted by a long chains of rapids. The picturesque village is situated at the point of junction at the foot of a steep acclivity. A long wooden bridge, resting on stone piers, traverses the united volume of water immediately below, and a mile lower down, the whole, roaring over the Bull's Ring rapid, rushes impetuously through the Gap. The scene presented from the crest of the mountain above the village, of the course of the rivers both before and after their junction, is one of the most striking in the United States. The channel of the Shenandoah to the right, appears obstructed by low reefs of slate rock, as far as it is visible, and that of the Potomac to the left, furrowed by rapids and broken by wooded islands. The mountains overhanging both vallies, are rocky and well wooded, and present fine picturesque scenery along the course of the two canals, which have been constructed for the distance of a mile up each for the convenience of the manufactories of carbines and muskets, established here by the General Government, allured by the defensible character of the position, the vicinity of coal, and great 'water-power.' The arms furnished by this manufactory, and another in Massachusetts, supply the whole Union. Neatness and economy seem to characterize every department.

Our return to the Point of Rocks on the Potomac, gave us a first introduction to American river-scenery. The mode of conveyance was a boat, about seventy feet in length, manned by a mulatto captain, and six or seven coloured men. Its movements were directed by a large oar at either end. These dusky fellows are bred to their business, and under their guidance the unwieldy machine shot like lightning through the passes of the Bull's Ring rapid, and among the many islands which deck the surface of this 'River of the woods,' a name which it well deserves. Once at the Point of Rocks, the rail-road carriages conveyed us on our return to the city.

Various shorter excursions and visits occupied the remainder of the month—none more interesting and delightful than that of a few days to the Manor, the seat of Charles Carroll, of Carrollton, the only surviving subscriber of the Declaration of Independence; —a venerable and polished gentleman of the old school, drawing towards the close of a long and active life, and an object of the respect and love of the whole country. We often recalled the events of this visit, with interest, as, before our return from our long excursion westward, he too, had passed away from among the living. The simple fact of such individuals as himself, Washington, Hamilton, and others, of their known character and excellence in private life, having eventually taken a share in effecting the separation of the colonies from the mother-country, was sufficient to make me feel desirous to look into the causes. There were faults on both sides, doubtless; but of one thing I have become convinced, that the convulsion which separated us, was quite as painful to the one as to the other, and little desired or anticipated by thousands in America, till necessity and the course of events, left no other choice.

Immediately upon my return, and that of my two companions, from our trip southward, at the close of June, we made, conjointly, an excursion up the Hudson river, and to the Kaatskill mountains, lingering for a few days by the way, in a delightful retreat, in the bosom of the Highlands.

If, after having with one exception visited every State and Territory in the Union, I might feel myself authorized to form a judgment, I should venture the opinion, that the United States, taken as a whole, is far from possessing a fair proportion of what we should term picturesque scenery. Italy, Switzerland, Spain, our own group of Islands, and Germany, have, in their character and accessories, those details which render them essentially picturesque; not only because the works of man, by which they are thickly diversified, has made them so, but because the natural disposition of the surface—broken ground, bare rock, wood, water, verdure, mountains and vallies, alternating in quick succession—has stamped that peculiar character upon them. But the abrupt outlines of surface, so usual in the Old World, and the interminable interchange of the various elements of the picturesque, are of much rarer occurrance in the New. I use the epithet in its proper sense. It is in vain to look for its common occurrence in the vast alluvial tracts of forest and prairie in the immense valley of the Mississippi, or in the regions of the same geological formation extending from New Jersey, between the Allegheny and the Atlantic, to the Cape of Florida. You would not expect to find it as an ordinary character of the long parallel, rarely broken, and forested ridges, and the intervening vallies, which, under a variety of names, divide the waters of the East from those of the West. It is hardly to be met with, in the undulating, richly cultivated central districts of Pennsylvania, New York, or Maryland. Even in the New England States, though more rocky and broken, more cut up by internal lakes, and under longer cultivation than the Southern and Western, I should be sorry to undertake a solitary pedestrian journey, trusting to the charms and variety of the scenery to while away fatigue or ennui. In a continent where the forest still covers so large a portion of both mountain and plain, where the undisturbed ribs of rock are hidden within the mountain sides by the swelling and even outlines of the mould, protected and increased by the forests of ages, there must be monotony.

Again, what nature has to a certain degree denied, man has hitherto done but little to remedy. As to ancient architecture, it is not necessary to remind you that there is none; the styles of building usually adopted in the United States, however commodious and pretty, or adapted to the different climates, have rarely any thing picturesque about them. The first operations of the settler in the primeval forest are productive of a deformity which years can scarcely remove.

Still you must not misunderstand me. Though you cannot, in speaking of these vast regions, say that the general character of their scenery is picturesque, —yet go more into detail, and you will find, though they may be far apart, scenes of the most exquisite natural beauty, fully justifying the application of that epithet. The course of the Hudson abounds with them from its source till it meets the ocean. Range all the world over and you will never see a more lovely valley than that of the Mohawk throughout its whole extent; or sweeter scenes than those reflected in the bright waters of Lake George and its neighbours. Such are many of the slopes and vales in the broken country on both sides of the Allegheny;—the frequent Gaps burst through the several chains, through which the redundant streams roll down over the rapids towards the lower country; —many of the scenes on the upper coasts of New England, and none more so than the rarely-visited and rarely-mentioned Portland. The upper Mississippi, from the Falls of St. Anthony, where the mighty river pours down from an elevated region of marsh and lakes, to its junction with the Missouri, abounds in picturesque scenery. Many parts of Michigan lay a claim to be included, and other isolated instances might be cited as my memory retraces the steps of the last two or three years.

But do not suppose that for the rest there is no charm;—that there is nothing in the Western world to make up for the deficiency of this pleasing attribute. There is a character to which it may proudly lay claim in the face of the East, and that is, sublimity. I know what you would say—I never forget the Alps and their majesty, but they stand almost alone.

Get to the summit of the Allegheny, and look out upon the dark mantle of primeval forest clothing the swelling ridges which roll towards the deep blue horizon, rising and falling like the tempest-stirred ocean;—bury yourself in their recesses amongst the giant trees;—look forth on her vast estuaries, her ocean, lakes, and bays indenting the shores for hundreds of miles, sparkling in the sunbeams, or reflecting the deep blue of heaven through her own transparent atmosphere;—stand upon her boundless prairies stretching to the westward, a thousand miles of unbroken grassy meadow, bespangled with flowers of every hue, where no hand ever reaps, no finger ever culls, and but few feet ever tread;—sail over her inland seas in calm or storm, and know yourself, though surrounded by the watery horizon for hours, in the centre of a continent! Then mark her numberless rivers, whether thousands of miles from their bourne in the Ocean, spreading under your eye a broad moving mirror of shining water in the vast solitude of the silent forests; boiling down a rapid for miles as white as snow; contracted among their poplar islands to a torrent—or yet nearer their estuary, amidst the cultivated fields of the lower and more thickly inhabited lands, when the accumulated waters of a thousand streams press on in one wide reach after the other, and expand into broad tide-stirred bays ere they finally merge in the great Deep.

Well may America be proud of such scenes. All bear the impress of sublimity. The feelings which they convey to the human mind may be less pleasing and less definite, but they are more durable.

One scene yet remains, which, though you have gazed upon the Alps in all their splendid alternations of high sublimity, and acknowledged the presence of the same feeling while floating on the bosom of the Ocean in calm or tempest,—still stands forward among these, the world's wonders, and vies with them, in claiming its degree of this attribute,—and that is Niagara; the huge step between the waters of an upper and a lower world, whence the thunder of water has echoed through the forests, and the vapour of the great cataract has ascended for ages, like smoke from an altar to the great Creator of All.

LETTER IV.

About the second week in July, after being witnesses of the panic caused in New York by the outbreak of the cholera, we prepared to follow Mr. Irving to Boston, where he purposed to give us rendezvous previous to our visit to the White Mountains, the highest group in the Union. Accordingly, one rainy morning we put ourselves on board a noble steam-boat, and proceeding through the East River, we glided past the redoubted Hell-Gate, Pot, Frying-Pan, Hog's Back, Hen and Chickens, and other dangers of olden times, and entered upon the broad surface of Long Island Sound.

Instead, however, of pursuing the ordinary course to Newport and Providence, we were set ashore at the little port of Newhaven in Connecticut, and subsequently pursued our journey through the centre of that State to Hartford and Northampton. In landing among these, the early settlements of the New World, after glancing at the States more to the southward, you are struck with the air of comparative antiquity in many objects. The houses, the enclosures, and the trees planted among them, have a much more English appearance. The towns and villages are more thickly strewed over the face of the country, and their outskirts much less ragged and less incumbered with rubbish and building materials. The population seems to be at home on the soil, and children to have succeeded to the inheritance of their fathers for many generations. Old houses of imported brick, aged Lombardy poplars, grass-grown and discoloured pavements and thresholds, and orchards full of grey distorted apple-trees, mark the vicinity of many of the earliest settlements. Here or there stands an ancient tree—the sole survivor of the original forest, and a boundary-mark of the first colonists. The cemeteries are more spacious and more decently maintained than you will observe elsewhere, and within their precincts you see many a time-stained tombstone, of the exact pattern and fashion in ornament and inscription, as those picturesque memorials of the dead which crowd the hallowed church-yards of the mother-country. The signs of long and steady cultivation may be remarked on the face of the landscape, and all these things combined, throw a degree of interest over the country apart from the charms of natural scenery, which contrasts agreeably with that air of rawness and newness which is imprinted upon the works of man in other portions of the continent, and which is so opposed to anything like poetry and sentiment.

The valley of the Connecticut river struck us as one of the most lovely we had ever beheld. Many are the beauties with which nature has decked the verdant, fertile, and park-like shores of that pastoral stream in its lower course, as it winds among flourishing towns, and bears upon its broad bosom the fruits of the industry and commercial activity of a busy population. The numerous villages have a delightful appearance in the distance with their clean-built, white houses; their gardens, and broad streets. The weeping elm is the glory of New England, and trees of great beauty and size not unfrequently line both sides of the streets, and cluster about the older mansions.

Above Hartford the banks of the river rise to a greater elevation, and the whole style of scenery about Springfield and Northampton is lovely in the extreme. Indeed this river is said to abound in romantic views throughout its long and varied course. In the course of our tour, we again came upon its banks, at the little town of Lancaster in New Hampshire, two hundred miles above Northampton, and still found it a broad deep stream flowing in an exquisite vale, in a country where cultivation was gradually wresting the soil from the dark primeval forests, and surrounded by nearer or distant chains of mountains.

From Northampton we crossed the state by the direct road to Boston. Stage-coachmen are here, as elsewhere, a peculiar race; they drive well and fearlessly but not in jocky style, and in a manner quite devoid of grace. They display no coquetry in dress, and are evidently fatalists, taking always the chances of an overturn against the chances of escape. You see them dash over a steep hill in rapid career, sometimes driving six in hand, and hardly holding in the horses during the descent, seemingly trusting to their stars, the beds of rough stone, deep sand, or the frequent gutters constructed across the roads in the hilly districts to prevent their being washed away, to bring them gradually and safely to the bottom.

While travelling commodiously to and fro in the New England states, the mind is frequently inclined to occupy itself with the singular and striking circumstances of its first settlement. Two centuries and a half have rolled by since the May-Flower and her burden of pilgrims approached the shores of this part of America, then totally unknown and unexplored; and no country on earth can boast a more remarkable and a more chequered history since that period. Whatever may be your modification of religious opinion, you cannot but admire the strength of mind, simplicity of faith and purpose, and almost superhuman perseverance and hardihood of character of the early colonists. They were placed truly in fearful circumstances, and it is both instructive and consoling to see how the back became suited to the burden. However rudely transplanted from the bosom of civilized society, they 'steeled their souls' and were gifted with a power of endurance which might be deemed beyond nature by those who have not seen how much strength both of mind and body, man has been endowed with, and is capable of exerting under the excitement of peculiar circumstances, beyond that modicum of either, which he may be called to exert in the common walks of life.

Their minds were not only unappalled by the exchange they had made, between 'a paradise of pleasure and plenty, and a wilderness of wants,'—the change of clime and scene, unheard-of hardships and privations, cold, hunger, and disease;—but evidently gaining strength from the very destitution of their position, their being beyond all certain human aid and help—in the fervour of religious dependence on God they struggled on under all these accumulated causes of trial, and those of a yet more fearful character which awaited them in the roused and implacable hostility of the tribes whom they supplanted from without, or the fire of fanaticism and schism within their settlements, and finally triumphed.

You inquire into the origin of most of the pleasant towns and villages of Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, and find few whose early foundations were not laid upon ground bedewed by the sweat and blood of the little band of brothers, which first raised the axe in that part of the forest. The majority of the settlements had their commencement in a few individuals either taking possession of a tract of land ceded to them by the Indian sachems, or purchasing the same of the companies holding a large district under the royal grants and charters. They formed themselves into communities, having their own civil and religious laws and their municipal regulations, and in general submitted to such an unusual scrutiny into individual conduct and private life, as to be a marvel in the present time. They bound themselves soberly together into a body politic, the separate settlements by degrees united, and submitted to a common government. The watchfulness of their magistrates over the public morals was pushed to a most ridiculous extent. But you have only to peruse any of their codes, the Blue Laws of Connecticut for instance, or read any of the chronicles of the time, to satisfy yourself as to that.

In those early times, and under those peculiar circumstances, all men expressed themselves with vehemence and acted with violence. Scarcely had the first colonists landed, before religious feuds broke out and further separations occurred. Men who had quitted their native country, hand in hand, for the same holy cause, found in the solitude of their new position fresh subjects of difference, which admitted of no adjustment and no mutual forbearance and forgiveness; but proudly drew away from each other deeper into the woods, unappalled by danger and utter loneliness. The severity of manners and morals practised among them was accompanied by distrust, intractability, and rancour. The emigration of the Quakers and Baptists, lent fuel to the flame, and persecution was added to other troubles. From being the oppressed, they became the oppressors.

Fanaticism brought in the end its own punishment, and a terrible one it was. The belief in witchcraft arose and spread like a contagion in some of the settlements, and it was not till after a number of lives had been sacrificed to it, that the inhabitants awoke as from a dream, and lamented their falling off from reason and true Christianity.

If the history of this people in their relation to one another is worthy of study and full of interest, that of their struggles with the Indian inhabitants of the forest, is not the less so. It is to be lamented that here, as everywhere else, the superior power and intelligence of the whites only led to the speedier and more certain destruction of the latter; and much of the misery on both sides is to be traced in its first source to the conduct of the former. It is humiliating to mark how extremes meet, and how the fate of the Indian, under the lash of the unsparing zeal and cupidity of the most bigotted Roman Catholic in the central divisions of this Continent, where tens of thousands were sacrificed under the plea of doing God service, was that also the Northern Indian, under the relentless barbarity of the most fanatical among Protestants, who, deeming themselves a peculiar people, turned a war of defence, to which their conduct had mainly given rise, into a war of extermination, and believed they were thus fulfilling the will of God.

However stern the necessity appeared to be, which bade the Puritans seek elsewhere for a land where they might worship God without molestation, according to their own consciences, abundant testimonials are extant of the ardent love and affection with which these early emigrants looked back to the land of their fathers.

'We in this country,' says one of them,[1] 'have left our near relations, brothers, sisters, fathers' houses, nearest and dearest friends; but if we can get nearer to God here,—He will be instead of all, more than all to us. We may take that out of God that we forsook in father, mother, brother and sister, and friend, that hath been near and dear to us as our own soul. Even among the most wicked sinners there may be found some righteous,—some corn among the chaff,—some jewels among the sand,—some pearls among a multitude of shells. Who hath made England to differ from other nations, that more jewels are to be found there than elsewhere? or, what hath that island that it hath not received? 'The East and the West Indies yield their gold, and pearl, and sweet spices—but I know where the spicy Christians be. England hath yielded these, yet not England, but the grace of God that hath ever been with them. We see what hope we may have concerning *New* England, though we do not deserve to be named the same day with our dear mother.'

And that this love was real and unfeigned, was proved for years, by their cherished relations with home, as they taught their children to call their mother-country;—by their willingness of dependence;—their very prejudices;—the blood which they freely shed in the quarrels of their king, and by a multitude of other testimonials now thrown aside and forgotten. For a while this affection grew with their growth, and increased with their strength. It need not have been estranged, and perhaps never would have been, had England understood her true interests, and always acted with justice. But she was only a stepmother at best. Perhaps temporary oppression from the measures of government on one hand, and a sense of growing strength and importance on the other, would hardly have effected it, despite the democratic feeling which existed in the country from its earliest settlements. There are other things which are even more potent than oppression in producing the separation of colonies from the parent states:—offended pride; pique; the soreness produced by unmerited ridicule; the disgust consequent upon being undervalued—and other passions of that class whose workings are more hidden, but infinitely more sure and certain in their effects.

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[1] Mr. Whitney, a pastor of Lynn, Massachusetts, from 1636 to 1690.

In referring to the early history of this country and the circumstances of its colonization, there is one fact which it is perhaps well to bear in mind, at a time when the spirit of change seems to pervade the very air we breathe; and the example of America is frequently quoted, to prove that the advocates for the overthrow of our Constitution, and covertly of our monarchical form of government, are not the rogues or dupes which most honest men would suppose. We are told to look to her, to see how a country may throw aside monarchy, become a democratic republic,—flourish, and increase, and give abundant promise of future greatness and power. This is true, the United States do flourish, and they do increase, and they promise great things,—may they fulfil them! But this is to be gathered from their history, that when the American colonies threw off their allegiance to the monarch of Great Britain and his government, they never threw aside the British constitution, which did not intimately concern them.

Many suppose that it was not till the Revolution that the Americans began to govern themselves, when, in fact, they had all along been brought up to self-government. The constitution generally agreed to by the different bands of colonists was a pure democracy; many of them, even down to the time of the Revolution, possessed and exhibited all the essential attributes of free states. The Puritans were especially republicans in creed and discipline; and in all their arrangements, this principle was predominant. And this the Government at home knew and acknowledged for many years, and had it been always remembered, the bond between us might long before this have changed its character, but it never would have been rudely broken. The royal prerogative of control was wisely and sparingly exercised in the internal affairs of the colonies, even in their earliest and feeblest state; and it was not till it began to be inauspiciously and oppressively put forward, that there was any avowed disposition on their part to resist.

If by these disjointed and hasty remarks, I should have succeeded in directing your attention to an interesting subject, I shall have gained my end.

At Boston we found our companion awaiting our arrival at the Tremont Hotel, and on chatting over our projects, we resolved to proceed without delay on our tour to the northward, the rather, as all minds were more or less unhinged by the absorbing subject of conversation and dread, the cholera. We had therefore only time to glance at the Lions. It is a subject of regret, that, neither on the present nor a subsequent visit, had we a fitting opportunity of becoming more intimately acquainted with the details and the society of this large and handsome capital. It is by far the most English-looking city of the Union, and has a character for possessing much good, well-educated, and accomplished society, male and female. My great quarrel (for one may contrive to pick a quarrel every where) is that the good Bostonians pertinaciously persist in crowing over the battle of Bunker's Hill, as though they had gained any thing on that occasion worth being thankful for. You recollect, doubtless, that we were taught to crow over it also as school-boys, as a victory of King George's. But many of the old, and apparently settled layers of the brain get strangely turned upside down by travelling.

Much of the country to the north of Boston, with the exception of the fertile lands in immediate contiguity to the rivers, might be described in few words, as a labyrinth of forests, lakes, granite rocks, and boulder-stones, dispersed over an undulating surface; with cultivated tracts and flourishing villages and towns, wherever the courses of the clear streams are interrupted by rocks, and thus rendered serviceable for the purposes of manufacture, or where the soil is particularly rich. The first days' journey northward brought us over the Merrimac, to the town of Concord, in New Hampshire. The beauty of the ponds or lakes, with which the country is frequently broken, lying deeply sunk in the forests, diversified by islands and promontories, and frequently extending twelve or fifteen miles in length, was the principal feature which caught our attention.

The second day we reached the shores of Winnipissiogee Lake, the largest in New Hampshire, and between twenty and thirty miles long. On our route we visited a Shaker settlement, clean, orderly, and odd, but otherwise in no way distinguished from others of their community dispersed over the Union, and frequently described. To what singular and childish vagaries will men resort, when through perverse pride they sacrifice their simple belief in revelation at the shrine of human reason. How many in our day are content to grope along by the light of their own sorry taper, rather than walk in the glorious light which God has freely offered us.

The lake with the long name, as written above, we found less beautiful than many of its inferiors in extent; but the scenery from thence to the base of the White Mountains at Conway, and still further in their recesses towards the Notch, is truly romantic. This detached group occupies the centre of the State of New Hampshire. The country at the base is, for the most part, covered with endless pine forests, full of ponds and tangled streams, through which the smaller rivers, proceeding from the slopes, filter slowly towards the more open country. There seems to be going forward in many parts of these uncultivated districts, a continual struggle between the two great elements, earth and water. Large tracts are overflowed at one season, and the land and its produce drowned beneath the dark lake; while, on the bosom of many of the latter, banks of sand are gradually thrown up by the action of the waves; shallows are formed, which teem with aquatic plants, water-snakes, terrapins, and bull-frogs; piles of floating and rotting timber are stranded upon them; a vegetable mould is formed, and in the course of years an island rises, covered with the ordinary forest trees of the climate. The latter, from the predominance of the fir tribe among them, are of a much gloomier character than those further to the south; but they abound with many shapely and beautiful trees, none more so than the tall sugar-maple; and many sweet flowers peep out from the marshes, or from the thickets of fern and dwarf oak. How wonderful and how imperfectly understood are many of the ordinary operations of nature! No sooner does the axe of the woodman, or the accidental burning of the forests, destroy one class of trees and brushwood—a class that may have apparently covered the soil for centuries—but another race, perfectly distinct, rises, as though by magic, from the disturbed and discoloured soil, and covers it with beauty. The proofs of the almost universal principle of spontaneous vegetation throughout both the forest and prairie lands of the New Continent, are so well known and acknowledged, as to need no additional confirmation at the present day. We have met with continual evidences of its truth in every part of the east and west. It would seem that the seeds of one class of plants and forest-trees must be deposited by some catastrophe beyond the action of light, heat and atmospheric air; where they lie, supplanted by another growth, and are forgotten, preserving, however, the vital principle for centuries in a dormant or torpid state, till accident or tillage brings them to a position favourable to their re-production to light and life.

One of the most remarkable instances of this extraordinary phenomenon, of frequent but well attested occurrence, is, that the marl dug from pits thirty feet deep in some parts of the Union, on being spread over the soil, becomes instantly covered with white clover: and in New Jersey, this is the case with the mud dragged up from the bottom of the Delaware, and used for the purposes of manure.

From Conway, we followed the valley of the river

Saco, as I have already implied, to the Notch or gap in the mountains near which it rises; a remarkable and romantic pass, frequented in summer by numbers of tourists like ourselves; and in the winter, when all the mountains and the countries at their base are often covered for weeks with deep snow, by innumerable sledges laden with cheese and corn, transported through this pass from the fertile vallies of Vermont and the upper country, to the coast.

The ascent of the highest summit of the cluster—Mount Washington, (6234 feet) was attempted by our party, under disadvantageous circumstances: upon gaining the summit, after some hour's toil and much expectation, we were enveloped in heavy mist, which set our patience at defiance, and sent us cold and wet on our downward route. A solitary scramble to the summit of the third in rank, situated in the same chain, which I had contrived to accomplish the preceding day, under better auspices, allows me to give you some faint picture of the scenery of the White Hills.

As a mountain view, it was truly magnificent, though by far the most gloomy I had ever beheld. The entire group, save five or six of the most elevated mountains, which rear their scalps of micacious rock over a belt of dwarf fir, appears invariably clothed to the very summits with the dense northern forest, and excepting here and there in the deepest vallies, or at such a distance that the gazer could but just detect the difference amidst the blue tints of the horizon, where the swelling surface sank imperceptibly down towards the lower country, the eye was scarcely relieved by the sight of cultivation. No rock could be descried except that which heaped up the highest summits; no bright green pastures were seen on the steep slopes; no white cottages shone like stars from afar; but here and there the precipitous declivities were deeply seamed by tremendous earth-slides, appearing like gashes in the dark face of the mountains. A number of misty lakes gleamed in the distance to the southward, and occasionally you saw the white smoke rising from some upland valley where a hardy son of the soil had pitched his habitation, and began his struggle with the wilderness and its inhabitants.

From my description you will gather that the upper districts of this mountain region are still in the state of nature, as wild as when the red warriors, two centuries ago, gathered themselves together in their recesses and leagued for the destruction of the intruders on their coasts; and, with the exception of the Indian tribes, the district is still tenanted by almost the same inhabitants. Here the bear, the catamount, the Siberian lynx, the wolf, and the lordly stag, still find harbour.

By ascending the valley of the Saco, and descending that of the Ammonoosuc, we cut completely across the chain. Pourtales and myself continued our route as far north as Lancaster; and then, having parted for awhile from our companion, who was obliged to return for a few days to New York, with an intention of joining company again in ten days' time at Saratoga Springs, we bent our steps to Montpellier, in Vermont, and took our course southward through the whole range of the Green Hills, the back-bone of that State, to Bennington.

The interval spent in thus rambling through the fertile vallies of that chain of beautifully wooded hills, has left a very pleasant class of recollections, but in general of so uniform and ordinary a character, that I do not think you would thank me for delaying my narrative here.

We ascended Killington Peak, a prominent summit of the chain, rising four thousand feet above Lake Champlain, which we descried glistening like a sheet of silver in the distant horizon; and we remained one day in the village of Royalton, upon which I will venture a few remarks; partly because we were stationary and more at liberty to look at the scene around us, and partly because of all the pretty New England villages, and there are thousands, there is none more lovely than that just named, on the banks of White River.

Too frequently you have to remark, in travelling in the United States, how utterly prosaic all the works of man appear; and it is well if there are exceptions now and then, and if you meet with secluded spots where the charms of nature are not blurred by the inharmonious works of human design.

The village in question lay niched in the very heart of the wooded hills on the banks of a crystal stream, flowing over a white pebbly bed, with an occasional mass of slate rock peering above the surface. The hills of medium height, rose steeply on either hand, displaying forested summits and sloping green sides denuded of timber, except occasional groups or single trees, and here and there broken by an isolated mass of rock. A conical hill with a solitary tree on its summit overtopped the lower end of the village. The latter was composed as usual principally of one street, with houses irregularly posted, and trees and gardens between. A few of the modern houses had a degree of taste to recommend them, and an old-fashioned cluster of low cottages with open galleries towards the street, and steps down to the level of the road, directly fronted the inn.

The church, barn-like as usual, and built with a scantiness of roof which added to its deformity, stood on the verge of a kind of Green, not far from the inn, which was one of the best and most prominent edifices of the place. It had the ordinary appendage of a huge staring sign and lofty sign-post in the middle of the street. The unoccupied spaces and corners in the immediate vicinity of the houses, which, at an earlier day, had doubtless been heaped with rubbish, now bore a rank growth of tall plants, among which the mulberry-coloured blossoms and broad white leaves of the milk-weed were conspicuous. There were charming walks along the river bank under the shade of the forest, which hung over the water from the northern slopes.

The interior of the inn was more calculated for individual comfort than those ordinarily met with out of the principal cities in the United States. I was delighted to observe a large family Bible with the ordinary list of family births, marriages, and deaths, on the side-table of our sitting-room. It was easy to see that we were in the 'land of sober habits,' and many things brought England to mind.

It was here our lot to spend a quiet Sunday. During the earlier hours of the day, a few loungers were seen under the arcade of our inn, else the village appeared deserted. Suddenly divers gigs, light carts, sulkies, and horsemen, came from all sides, and congregated under a line of sheds constructed at the back of the church. The congregation assembled. A plain, and unaffected sermon was delivered by a baptist minister, prefaced and followed by the congregational singing, led by the feeble notes of a single flute. The service ended, the quiet street of the village appeared, for an instant, full of busy feet; doors were opened and shut, the gigs and sulkies were filled, and straightway whirled away, but few minutes sufficed to restore it to its solitude. and for the remainder of the day, hardly a sound was heard. The good people of Royalton seemed to be quietly digesting the spiritual food thus afforded them, and their Sunday was literally a day of rest.

The manners and habits of this great eastern division of the American people are strikingly distinct from their fellow citizens to the southward. The character of the inhabitants of New England for diligence, shrewdness, and all those matter-of-fact talents which tell in a country like this, where every man is struggling to get and maintain an independence, is probably familiar to you. They are speculative, at the same time that their caution, clear-sightedness, and indomitable perseverance, generally ensure success. In politics, their practical conduct is strikingly opposed to the theoretical vagaries of the south. They have often, and not without reason, been compared to the northern inhabitants of our own island; but, I think, the New Englanders have all the steadiness and prudence of the Scotch, with yet greater degree of ingenuity. Like the Scotch, they foster education; like the Scotch, they are inclined to the more severe forms of religious discipline and worship; like the Scotch, they are fearfully long-winded; like them they are gadders abroad, loving to turn their faces southward and westward, pushing their fortunes wherever fortunes are to be pushed, and often in places and by shifts where no one ever dreamed that fortunes were to be gained. They may be found supplanting the less energetic possessor of land and property in every state of the Union. They have a finger upon the rim of every man's dish, and a toe at every man's heel. They are the pedlars and schoolmasters of the whole country; and, though careless of good living abroad, when at home and at ease, they are fond of 'creature comforts.' No where is the stomach of the traveller or visitor put in such constant peril as among the cake-inventive housewives and daughters af New England. Such is the universal attention paid to this particular branch of epicurism in these States, that I greatly suspect that some of the Pilgrim Fathers must have come over to the country with the cookery book under one arm and the Bible under the other; though I find in more than one code of ancient laws made in early times, orders issued that no person should make 'cakes or buns, except for solemn festal occasions, such as burials and marriages.' There are but few boys among them; many of their children seem to start up at once to puny men. I should not that think they were a fun-loving nation, or had great reverence for holidays;—jokes are an abomination to many among them.

Though, in common with all Americans, they are proud and boastful of their claims to unlimited freedom, they are fond of imposing grievous burdens upon the inferior orders of animals within their power; and you see horses and cows, pigs and geese, labouring under the most singular yokes it is possible to conceive.

The faults allied to this kind of character are easily recognizable. Where education and religion has had its proper influence, and high-mindedness, and innate sense of honour exist, all this shrewdness and strength of character will add to the respectability of the possessor, and to the good of the social circle. But where it is allied with meanness and littleness of soul, it must bear the stamp of sordid and low cunning in petty transactions, and of uncompromising, ungenerous aggrandisement and selfishness in larger operations. Hence the diverse terms in which you hear the so-called Yankee or Easternman named, and the praise and obloquy with which the character which I have attempted so roughly to sketch is alternately drawn. I was never, to my knowledge, taken in by any of my particular or casual acquaintance in any of the Eastern states, and I am far from believing, though I may have laughed at the thousand-and-one-tales related of the extravagant ingenuity and cunning of the Yankee pedlars tramping through every nook of the Union; but I can easily conceive that there is many an arrant rogue among them, and many an arrant goose amongst their customers.

I have in pure idleness given you as harmless a sketch of the character of one great division of these doughty republicans as was ever penned, and surely so far I should escape having my name held up to national scorn and obloquy, by my Transatlantic acquaintances, should it ever get to their ears. But I must not make too sure; for a man sometimes gets spiteful in spite of himself, and I may possibly by and bye, in the progress of my relation, arrive at a place where I was both cross and crossed, had the tooth-ache, was disappointed or contradicted, met with dull weather or a cold breakfast, and then you may find that I occasionally see through a bilious medium, and can find fault, like other English travellers, with all and every thing about me.

From Royalton, we crossed the chain to Rutland.

We were told we should find in the latter a far more elegant town, which we found to mean, more pretending, more scattered, more staring, and more bustling.

We did not forget our promise to 'byde tryste' at Saratoga on the first days of August, and turning to the westward from Bennington, we crossed the Hudson at Lansingburg, and were there at the time appointed.

I shall not however detain you here at present, but with permission, will leave any allusion to the gay motley crowd at that fashionable resort till another opportunity, and will carry you forward with me to Niagara, which we visited in the month of August.

LETTER V.

In attempting in this, or any future letter, to give you an idea of 'men and manners' in the United States—which, by the by, would seem to be a most portentous and dangerous subject for any person, male or female, to meddle with,—I would always have you bear in mind, that traits which might be introduced as characteristic of one state of society, or of one class of individuals, will hardly admit of general application to the people as a nation. The only distinctive and really characteristic marks exhibited by the mass of the population are, perhaps, a hearty detestation of monarchical forms of government on the one hand and a boundless admiration of the republican form under which they live on the other.

As to the rest, where is their nationality? The fact is, that, in their present condition, the people of these countries cannot be considered to have a national character. It is even to be doubted whether they will ever amalgamate sufficiently, under the great difference of temperament, style of life and habits consequent upon such diverse climates alone, so as to admit of one picture, however broadly sketched, being in every particular characteristic of the whole. How can the same description of men and manners be applicable to a mixed population, spread over such a vast extent of country, under such very different circumstances, of such different blood and origin? Turn to whichever part of the Union you may, manners perfectly distinct from each other, traceable to the stock from which the individual sprang, in person, dwellings, prejudices, prepossessions and modes of expression are distinguishable.

Here you will find the children of the Pilgrim Fathers, and the early colonists from the pure English stock; whose descendants have also spread over the fresh virgin soil of Ohio, and the other states in the same parallel, and planted themselves in every part of the Union where shrewdness and industry could win their way. You may trace the French Refugee in West Chester; the Dutch in New York; the German in the valley of the Mohawk; the Swede in New Jersey and Delaware; the Quaker and the German in Pennsylvania, together with distinct Colonies of Irish;—the descendant of the Cavalier in Virginia, Maryland, and the States to the South, and the Italian and Spaniard in Florida. On the other hand, between the Creole in Louisiana, and the French Canadian on the Upper Lakes and rivers—you detect many races of men, with peculiar habits and manners, distinct from each other, like all those enumerated, in many particulars, though for the time bound together by a common Government, and the ties of common interest.

When, in addition to this evident reason why a given description of 'men and manners' which may be a true picture when applied to one corner of the country, must be inapplicable to another, the unsettled state of a large proportion of the population, the advantages enjoyed by one portion for the attainment of a high degree of civilization, and the disadvantages under which another may labour are all admitted, who would expect that any description of character or manners were to be considered national? Yet, neither foreigners, nor, it might be surmised, the Americans themselves appear aware of this. Less surprise may be felt, however, at the temper of mind with which a prejudiced or superficial foreigner sets down any particular trait, (especially if a discreditable one) as characteristic of the whole people from Maine to Florida,—than at the utter perversity and sensitiveness of mind, of by far the greater majority of Americans of whatever class, in taking to heart and bitterly resenting any chance remarks upon the 'men and manners' of a given district, when perhaps not exactly of a laudatory description,—thus making the quarrel of one division of the community the quarrel of all. In this respect there is doubtless a characteristic nationality of feeling. To see a gentleman of Boston or Baltimore, resenting by word and deed, the sketch published to the world of the society of a district of the West, borders on the ludicrous, the more so, as, if untravelled, they are frequently as ignorant of the real state of things there, as a stay-at-home Englishman might be supposed to be. It impresses one with the idea, that the inhabitants of the United States, little mercy as they show each other in their stormy political contests, little measure as they hold in their terms of satire, and obloquy, defamation and abuse of parties and individuals in their public prints, are sensitive as a people, beyond example, to criticism from without, and more particularly so when the observation comes from an inhabitant of Britain. This weakness almost amounts to a national disease. A little thought may, perhaps, suggest some reason for it.

The English have not, as a nation, whatever may be supposed by those who gather their estimate of national feeling from the Reviews, much sympathy with this kind of sensitiveness. We have arrived at that happy pitch of national self-esteem, and our national pride is so little disturbed by unwelcome surmises or suspicions that in this or that particular we are really emulated or surpassed by our neighbours, that we calmly set down any one who comes amongst us, and tells us that in certain matters John Bull is surpassed by other nations, or an object of ridicule to them, as an ignorant or spiteful twaddler at once, and do not suffer the national temper to be ruffled. Having now, for so many years, been accustomed to have justice done us by our neighbours on all main points, however unwillingly, we can even afford to be satirized, or, as we would say, caricatured, in some minor particulars, and can magnanimously laugh at the same. But not so with America. She feels, and with reason, that justice has not always been done her in essentials, and by Britain in particular. She knows that there has been a spirit abroad having a tendency to keep the truth and her real praise away from the eye of the world, shrouded behind a vein of course ribaldry, and detail of vulgarities, which, if not positively untrue, were at least so invidiously chosen, and so confirmatory of prejudice, and so far caricature, when applied to the people as a mass, as almost to bear the stigma of untruth. She has felt that the progress made in a very limited period of time, and amidst many disadvantages, in reclaiming an immense continent from the wilderness, in covering it with innumerable flourishing settlements; her success in the mechanic arts; her noble institutions in aid of charitable purposes; the public spirit of her citizens; their gigantic undertakings to facilitate interior communication; their growing commerce in every quarter of the globe; the indomitable perseverance of her sons; the general attention to education, and the reverence for religion, wherever the population has become permanently fixed; and the generally mild and successful operation of their Government, have been overlooked, or only casually mentioned, while the failings, rawness of character, and ill-harmonized state of society in many parts; the acts of lawless individuals, and the slang and language of the vulgar, have been held prominently forward to excite scorn, provoke satire, and strengthen prejudice. In short, she has felt that her true claims upon respect and admiration have been either unknown or undervalued in Europe, and that especially that nation with whom she had the greatest national affinity, was inclined to be the most perseveringly unjust.

Hence partly arises, it may be surmised, the querulous state of sensitiveness, to which allusion has been made, and also that disposition to swagger and exaggerate, which has been laid to the charge of many Americans, not without reason.

As long as the national temper maintains this morbid tone, I have become more and more convinced that it will allow the justice of no criticism; and that no individual, however honest and striving against prejudice, however conciliatory, however sincerely regarding the people and their institutions with respect, however convinced that he who foments the ill-will and prejudice that may exist between the two countries, ill serves his own, the cause of humanity in the world, or the nobler ends of travel and observation—I say, no one will write a book, depicting the state of things in the United States, as they are, with all their unavoidable crudities and anomalies, and give the public mind in that country satisfaction. Moreover it is to be doubted whether any great good is ever to be effected by foreign criticism, especially in a case like that before you, where the criticised puts himself without the circle in which European rules and deductions, whether political or otherwise, would be deemed decisive. America must correct her failings, by the free course of her own native good sense, and I believe will do it where correction is needful. One thing is certain, she professes to have no more patience with our opinions, or respect for our gratuitous advice, than a painter would have for that of a circle of critics, who surround his easel, to pass judgment upon his projected chef d'œuvre, of which nothing but the preparatory shades of the ébauche appear on the canvas.

As to myself, I was neither tempted while in the country to brood over the disagreeable, nor to look on the dark side, neither can I do so now. I was treated every where with courtesy and good humour, and what less can I return.

Causes for dissatisfaction and disgust will always be discovered by the seeker, whoever and wherever he may be. There is no wit in describing as peculiar to America, that which is common to all the world. As to coarseness, and vulgarity of mind and manners, it is not, that abundance is not to be found in our own country, but that it is, from circumstances easily understood, more obtruded for the present into prominent positions in America: at the same time it must be allowed that in most situations, you may escape from its contemplation if you will. Does it not appear to you that there is something essentially vulgar in that mind, which in spite of its alleged disgust, can continually occupy itself with coarseness in others, and load itself and the memory with its details?

LETTER VI.

YOU may recollect my juvenile weakness, that of being a notorious cascade-hunter. There was something in the motion of a waterfall which always made my brain spin with pleasure. Impelled by this passion, as a boy, I ransacked the moorland and mountain districts of the north of England, in quest of the beautiful but diminutive specimens of this variety of natural scenery with which they abound; and at a later period, there was not an accessible waterfall within my range of travel from the Rhine Fall to Tivoli, that I did not contrive to approach, gaze upon, and listen to with infinite pleasure. So you may well ask what impression was made upon me by Niagara.

I am glad that the position and the general features of this celebrated scene are too well known to need description, and that you will require none from me.

At the commencement of the present century, Niagara, difficult of access, and rarely visited, was still the Cataract of the wilderness. The red Indian still lingered in its vicinity, and adored the Great Spirit and 'Master of Life' as he listened to the

'Thunder of the waters.'[1] The human habitations within sound of its fall were rare and far apart. Its few visitors came, gazed, and departed in silence and awe, having for their guide the child of the forest or the hardy backwoodsman. No staring, painted hotel rose over the woods and obtruded its pale face over the edge of the boiling river. The journey to it from the east was one of adventure and peril. The scarcely attainable shore of Goat Island, lying between the two great divisions of the cataract, had only been trodden by a few hardy adventurers, depending upon stout hearts and steady hands for escape from the imminent perils of the passage.—How is it now? The forest has everywhere yielded to the axe. Hotels with their snug shrubberies, out-houses, gardens, and paltry embellishment stare you in the face: museums, mills, staircases, tolls, and grog-shops, all the petty trickery of Matlock-Baths or Ambleside, greet the eye of the traveller. Bridges are thrown from island to island; and Goat Island is reached without adventure. A scheming company, on the Canadian side, have planned a 'City of the Falls,' to be filled with snug cottages, symmetrically placed, to let for the season; and in fine, you write to your friend in Quebec, and give him rendezvous at Niagara for a certain hour, and start yourself from Richmond, in Virginia, for the point proposed, with a moral certainty of meeting at the very day and hour specified, by taking advantage of the improvements of the age, and the well-arranged modes of conveyance by steamers, rail-roads, canals, and coaches.

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[1] Such is the signification of the Indian word Niagara.

In short, Niagara is now as hacknied as Stockgill-Force or Rydal-water, and, all things considered, the observation which an unimaginative 'Eastern man' is said to have made, addressing a young lady tourist, who was gazing breathlessly for the first time at the scene, was not so far out of keeping with it: 'Isn't it nice, Miss?' Yes, all is nice, very nice, that that active little biped man has done or is doing.'

But do not imagine that we grew peevish at the sight of the blots upon the landscape, to which I have alluded, and departed in wrath and disgust. We soon found that there was that in and about Niagara which was not to be marred by busy man and all his petty schemes for convenience and self-aggrandisement; and I may truly say, with regard to both our first and second visit, and stay within its precincts, that we were under the influence of its spell. While within the sound of its waters, I will not say you become part and parcel of the cataract, but you find it difficult to think, speak, or dream of anything else. Its vibrations pervade, not only the air you breathe, the bank on which you sit, the paper on which you write, but thrill through your whole frame, and act upon your nervous system in a remarkable, and it may almost be said an unpleasant manner.

You may have heard of individuals coming back from the contemplation of these Falls, with dissatisfied feelings. To me this is perfectly incomprehensible, and I do not know whether to envy the splendid fancies and expectations of that class of travellers, to whom the sight of Niagara would bring disappointment, or to feel justified in doubting whether they have any imagination for eye or natural scenery at all. How blank the world must be to them of objects of natural interest. What can they expect to see?

As to expectations, ours were excited and warm, and I shall never forget the real anxiety with which we looked out, on our ascent from Lewiston, for the first appearance of the object of our visit. The broad fathomless blue river, streaked with foam, which, deeply sunk in a colossal channel, hurried to our rencontre, and appeared at every fresh glimpse as we advanced swifter and in greater commotion, was to us a guarantee that the scene of its descent from the upper country could be no common one. When about three miles from the village on the American side, you gain your first view of the Falls, together with the river, both above and below,—the island which divides them,—and greater part of the basin at their feet.

I will not say but that the impression of that first glance was heightened afterwards by our nearer and reiterated survey of every portion of the cataract in detail; yet we all agreed that we could even then grasp the idea of its magnitude, and that all we had seen elsewhere, and all we had expected, was far surpassed by what was then shown to us. And when, the following year, two of us turned aside by common consent to pay a second visit to Niagara, after having, in the interval, visited many of the great falls of Lower Canada,—cataracts in comparison to which all European Falls are puerile; and we felt our curiosity excited to divine what impression a second visit would make—far from being disappointed, we felt that before Niagara, in spite of its comparative inferiority of elevation, all shrunk to play-things.

It is not the mere weight and volume of water that should give this far-famed cataract the first rank. Every surrounding object seems to be on a corresponding scale of magnificence. The wide liquid surface of the river above, with its swelling banks, contrasted by the deep blue floods below, as, boiling up from their plunge into the unfathomed basin they shock against one another, and race down towards the distant lake; the extreme beauty of the forested defile, with its precipices and slopes; the colouring of the waters, which in the upper part of its descent, is that of the emerald; the mystery and thick gloom which hide the foot of the Falls, and add to their apparent height, and the floating clouds of vapour, now hurried over the face of the landscape, as though urged by the breath of a hurricane, and then slowly ascending and hovering like a cloud in the blue sky, all combine to form a scene in which sublimity and picturesque beauty are enchantingly blended. There is here none of that stiffness either in the scenery, or the form and appearance of the particular object of interest which engravings too frequently give you the idea of.

Among the innumerable points of view, that form the precipitous shore of the river, about the distance I have alluded to, is the most satisfactory, if not the most striking. In the immediate vicinity of the Falls, the points of interest are so various, that if you would require a sketch, I should not know which to select. The grandest, doubtless, is from the Canadian shore, near the Horse-shoe Fall; but you pass from one to the other, and every where the picture presented has no compeer or rival in nature.

Many things combined to make us prefer choosing the village on the American shore, for our halting place, in preference to the garish hotel on the opposite site. The greater monotony of the right-hand division of the cataract, was counterbalanced by the grand distant view of its more varied neighbour, and by the practicability of a near approach to both from Goat Island, to which an easy access is afforded by a boldly-constructed bridge over the rapids. Besides, we agreed that the position of that village and its inns, was not only more rural and secluded, but that better taste was exhibited in its details.

What a glorious scene! To sit upon the summit of the impending precipice of the island, and see, as we did the morning after our first arrival, the summer mist begin to rise and disengage itself from the heavy white cloud of spray which rose from the depth of the boiling basin of the Great Fall beneath us. By degrees, the curtain was partially removed, revealing the wall of slowly-descending water behind, now dimly descried,—as confounded with the floating sheets of foam and spray which the wind of the mighty cataract drove backward and forward over it like innumerable clouds of thin floating gauze,—it mocked us with its constantly varying shape and position; and then appearing unveiled with its sea-green tints brilliantly illuminated by the passing sun-beam. An hour after, and the mist had disappeared; the Falls were sparkling in the bright sunshine; and a brilliant Iris was resting on the body of vapour which the wind carried away from the face of the descending columns. The scene at sun-set, day after day, was no way less majestic, when the sun glancing from the Canadian side of the river, lit up the precipices and woods of Goat Island, and the broad face of the American Fall, which then glowed like a wall of gold; while half the Fall of the Horse-shoe, and the deep recesses of the curve were wrapped in shade. Morning, noon, and night, found us strolling about the shore, and on the island, which is an earthly paradise.

I remember the quiet hours spent there, when fatigued with the glare of the hot bright sun, and the din of the Falls, with peculiar delight. We loved too, to escape from all those signs of man's presence, and busy-bodying to which I have alluded, and, burying ourselves in the fresh dark scarce-trodden forest still covering a great part of its area, to listen to the deadened roar of the vast cataracts on either hand, swelling on the air distinct from every other sound.

There, seated in comparative solitude, you catch a peep across a long irregular vista of stems of the white vapour and foam. You listen to the sharp cry of the blue jay, the tap of the red-headed woodpecker, and the playful bark of the squirrel; you scan the smooth white boles of the beech or birch, checquered with broad patches of dark green moss, the stately elm and oak, the broad-leaved maple, the silvery white and exquisitely chiselled trunk of the cedar, or the decaying trunk of the huge chesnut, garlanded with creepers; but you will hardly ever lose the consciousness of the locality. The spell of Niagara is still upon and around you. You glance again and again at the white veil which thickens or grows dim beyond the leafy forest:—the rush of the nearer rapids, the din of falling waters, the murmur of the echoes answering the pulsations of the descending mass, fill your ears, and pervade all nature.

Every thing around and about you appears to reply to the Cataract, and to partake of it, none more so than the evergreen forest which is bathed from year to year in the dew of the river. These noble trees, as they tower aloft on the soil, are sustained from youth to age by the invigorating spray of the mighty Falls. Their leaves are steeped, summer after summer in the heavy dew, their trunks echo the falling waters, from the day they rise from the sod, to that in which they are shaken to the ground; and the fibres of the huge moss-grown trunk, on which you sit, prostrate and mouldering on the rich mould beneath, bedded in the fresh grass and leaves, still vibrates to the sound of its thunders, and crumbles gradually to dust. But —all this proves nothing—as a matter-of-fact man might say, but that I am Niagara mad. We have much before us and many sublime scenes, though none may vie with that, before which we have been lingering :—*allons!*

On our departure from Buffalo, the thriving port at the eastern extremity of Lake Erie, an important change was effected in the previous plans of our little party. These had in some measure threatened a separation from our friend Washington Irving, to whom the Canadian provinces, which Pourtales and myself had intended to take as our next step, offered no particular interest. He therefore meditated a return to New York by the Ohio. Divers and kindly meant were the attempts repeatedly made to bring each other to adopt unity of plan, yet without success, till most fortunately a few hours before the separation was to take place, an unexpected circumstance was the means of re-uniting us in one common scheme. We had taken our passage on board a steamboat, bound for Detroit, but touching as usual, at the intermediate ports, at one of which, on the Ohio shore, Mr. Irving proposed landing, while we accompanied the vessel to the end of the voyage.

It was our fortune to meet on board with a gentleman, the communication of whose business and plans instantly reconciled us to any modification of ours which might be necessary to enable us to adopt the same.

The General Government had at this epoch determined to send out certain gentlemen as Commissioners, to arrange various matters connected with the Indian tribes newly congregated on the western frontiers. Prior to this, experience having shown the insurmountable inconveniences and the evils consequent upon the existence of bodies of men in their savage state in the centre of civilization, a resolution had been taken by the people of the United States to extinguish the claims of the Indian tribes to lands east of the Mississippi, by the gradual purchase of their lands or reservations, and to remove beyond that river. This project was now in the course of gradual execution, and divisions of many of the tribes were already ranged along the western boundary of Missouri and Arkansas. Others were on the point of removal. The commission to which I have alluded was to be stationed at the frontier-post of Fort Gibson, about eight hundred miles up the Arkansas river, and thither our new acquaintance, Judge E. of Hartford, one of the three Commissioners, was proceeding by way of St. Louis, and the State of Missouri. We learned from him that from this point it was contemplated to dispatch expeditions to various parts of the unexplored region to the West, to examine the surface of the country, and report upon the applicability of any portion of it being set aside for the occupation of the Indian tribes still to be removed. To the solicitation made that Mr. Irving would join company, and connect himself with the Commission, so far as he might find it agreeable, a prompt acquiescence was yielded on his part, as so doing merely entailed an extension of his plans; and as far as my comrade and myself were concerned, the frank promise of hearty welcome, if we would also form part of the expedition to further our own projects, offered too much temptation to be resisted or rejected.

So the tour in the Canadas was relinquished for the present, and it was now—hurra! for the Far West!

No certain intelligence as to the movements of others connected with the Commission, could be gained, till we should reach Louisville in Kentucky, and landing at Ashtabula, we had to repair thither with all becoming speed by way of Cleveland, Newark, Columbus, and Cincinnati.

LETTER VII.

In a letter recent I referred to the circumstances attending the early settlement of New England. Those which distinguished the first colonization of these rich regions of the West beyond the mountains, carry with them a yet greater degree of interest. Neither the history of the English colonists in Virginia, nor of those in the Eastern States, despite their fierce struggles with the red proprietors of the soil, can be said to be distinguished by an equal air of romance. The posts of the advancing column of civilization in these instances, were ordinarily pushed forward with a degree of caution, and seldom so far, as to be totally beyond the reach of co-operation and support. Here however the case was different. We see small companies of men, and even single individuals, impelled by a spirit of adventure, and the love of a free unshackled life, venturing some hundreds of miles in advance, over a difficult and elevated mountain barrier, planting themselves fearlessly in the wilderness on the other side, and remaining, without the hope of aid for months in utter solitude in a region, where nothing but the most sleepless caution could secure their lives against the merciless and wily savage.

It might be asked by one of the tame gentlemen of Europe, what was the object of these half-savages, and where the utility of encountering such a perilous state of exile. Were they criminals flying from the punishment of misdeeds which imperatively obliged them to get beyond the pale of orderly society? No. Was it sheer necessity? No. Was it lust of gain? Not altogether. Love of glory? No. Love of science? Still less. Were they young and ignorant of the perils? No, Boone was forty years old. More fool he! would answer many an one, who never would comprehend the motives and impulses of such vagrants. Yet even in the best regulated, most orderly, and most civilized state of society, in which the prevailing temper is to pursue and to love a quiet state of existence, in which the variations and even extraordinary incidents are so common-place and so gentle, as hardly to ruffle the monotony of its course, and where any departure from the ordinary boundaries is rather set down as a crime than a virtue—even there will be found individuals in whose bosoms there is a fire and restlessness which cannot endure a life of monotonous regularity. In Europe in olden time chivalry with all its romance, war, knight-errantry, minstrelsy, love, and nonsense, provided what was then a legitimate channel for those of this cast; and the temper of the times increased their number.

Till lately, war served the same purpose, drawing off the humours from the body politic; and the restless spirits of the times found an asylum and occupation in arms. However, in time of peace, such excitement no longer exists, and little remains but the discipline, which is wormwood to the young and impetuous.

It is from among those possessed of this restlessness of mind and body that you may, in looking over the records of human actions, cull the greatest number of great men of all countries and ages—men who dare attempt what others dare not; at the same time, for one individual, who, forsaking the beaten path, has by striking fortuitously into a more noble one suited to his talents, left a name and a character for high deeds to posterity, thousands, nay tens of thousands have only left the hacknied road to disappear in the swamp, and fall into oblivion or ignominy.

At the present time, the doors of the temple of Janus remain shut; chivalry is out of fashion—aye, not only its absurdities, but many of its noble, generous, courteous, and Christian graces. The increase of population has glutted the professions; modes and methods of distinction for the restless, which a century ago would have allured them, are now worn out. Travelling, the love of locomotion, that great resource for the changeful spirit, is no longer a mode of distinction. It is no longer a solitary being toiling forward in doubt and peril, and earning the right to be the sole narrator of the earth's wonders; but whole squadrons pouring down every European road. Ladies-maids and band-boxes are seen at the cataracts of the Nile, and our wives and sisters make the overland passage to India. As to forging and highway robbery, there are now so many ways found out of cheating your friend with perfect safety to your person, that it is not worth while to run the risks of either, alluring as some of the pictures lately given to the public might be.

One consequence of the present state of things appears to be, that the quantum of restlessness, formerly absorbed by a few comparatively, is now thrown into the composition of the whole mass, and though diluted, produces strange effects.

Hence these shoals of travellers;—the overcrowded watering-places;—those new lights in politics, religion and education; the innumerable speculations and consequent bankruptcies; the general impatience of government, and of moral as well as physical control. Hence this golden age of roguery and radicalism, cant, and *charlatanerie*; disunion, disloyalty, want of faith. Well might we say: alas for the times of chivalry! How many men of the present day, had they been born under its star, might have had their restlessness satisfied by giving or receiving many a hearty thwack and bang on the head, instead of doing the mischief to society which they threaten. How many might have run a better chance of honourable mention as stalwart knights and jousters, than they promise to do as politicians and reformers.

But to return from what may well be called a digression—To this spirit of restlessness, more than any other passion, it would seem that the early settlement of Kentucky and the West is to be ascribed. The hap-hazard and in some measure precarious existence of the Virginian and Carolinian frontier settler, was, as you will imagine, particularly favourable to the developement of this restless feeling.

The French who were the great pioneers of the country of the Lakes and upper Mississippi, had about the middle of the last century erected a fort at the junction of the Allegheny and Monogahela rivers, where Pittsburg now stands, for the protection of their trade on the Ohio, and the facility of making outfits; yet up to the defeat of General Braddock, or even ten years after it, nothing seems to have been known to the Anglo-Americans of the country to the west of the mountains and the south of the Ohio river. It is difficult for one, who, like myself, has seen the teeming population of the West at the present day, to believe, that two thirds of a century ago no white man had crossed the mountains of Virginia, to discover what lay on the other side. Yet such was the case! However, the time was coming when this vast extent of country was also to be brought under the dominion of the white man, and be added to that rich heritage which he should leave his children.

Ample as the country might seem to be on the eastern side of the Blue Ridge, and other lines of the Apalachian chain dividing the waters of the West from those of the Atlantic, it was beginning to be too crowded for some of the settlers. In their eyes, the country was becoming too thickly settled; the operation of the law, gentle as it might be, was too severe; the forests, from the increase of population, had become too scant of game—they had lived too long in one place. They knew nothing of the unexplored regions beyond the mountains; but, that from that quarter descended the bands of savages, which occasionally harried the higher settlements on the upper waters, from the Susquehanna to the Pedee.

In 1749, a lunatic, wandering as was his wont during his paroxysms, crossed the dividing ridge beyond the great valley of Virginia, and on his return asserted that he had been upon streams whose waters ran to the West. No great public notice seems to have been taken of this discovery. Yet it is upon record that a reconnoitering party, crossing the mountains in the same direction, in the year 1751, and falling upon the waters of what is now Green Brier River, a tributary of the Kenhawa, found two solitary white men, natives of New England, living on its banks, though some hundred yards distant from each other. Even in that wilderness, human passions and pertinacity of opinion had wrought disharmony, and there they had lived apart from the world and from each other, nothing passing between them but the morning salutation, as the one came from out of the hollow tree which served him for a shelter, and the other from his log hut. The Virginians subsequently made a small settlement there, which was utterly cut off in 1763 by an incursion of the Indians.

It was 1767 when the first adventurer from the banks of the Yadkin, in North Carolina, a man of the name of Finlay came back to his family, after a long absence, with accounts of the marvellous beauty and riches of the country beyond the mountains. He subsequently returned thither the same year, with a party of which the celebrated Daniel Boone was one; and from that time forward, adventurers from among the restless inhabitants of the outskirts of civilization were occasionally seen to quit the vicinity of the 'clearings' with their rifles, blankets, and dogs, and entering the forests, disappear for a while in the direction of the mountains.

One thing is not to be lost sight of—the experience of one hundred years and upwards had not been thrown away, and the hardy backwoodsman of this day had that in his favour which the New England settlers had been without. The modes and resources of Indian warfare were perfectly known to him. He had been cradled in the forests, and had been brought up amidst the alarms of Indian incursions. From his earliest youth he had been taught the value of the rifle, the most powerful and convenient weapon in the world for the use of a single arm. He knew the nature and resources of the country, and unshackled by the education or the prejudices of the Old World, the forest was now his home.

Still the hardihood, presence of mind, patience, and invincible resolution of these pioneers cannot be too highly estimated. I can conceive the feelings of wonder and delight of these first solitary adventurers, when surmounting the several ridges covered with their splendid vegetation of rhododendron, azaleas, and laurels, they looked down upon that wilderness of fertility and rich vegetation to the westward; that beautiful region, which though it now appeared to them as the land of paradise, was soon to verify its Indian appellation of 'the Dark and Bloody Ground,' to them also; and by these fearful epithets was it subsequently long known and stigmatized.

The early descriptions extant of the original state and appearance of this portion of the vast valley of the Mississippi, and the impressions they suggested, though recorded by no practised hands, have in them a truth and nature more suited to the sublimity of the subject than the attempts made at a later day with all their labour and finish. Truly, he who would pourtray the West must use other pallet and pencil than that of a miniature painter. It would appear, that while the regions to the north of the Ohio afforded a home to divers Indian tribes, the wide tract of country stretching on the southern shores towards the Cumberland mountains and the great river Mississippi, watered by so many noble streams, was claimed by none in particular, but formed a kind of hunting-ground, in which innumerable herds of wild animals found food and covert, and the bands of hostile Indians met to pursue alternately war and the chace.

It is easy to conceive, that the sight of those immense herds of Bison, an animal hitherto unknown to the settlers, the troops of deer, elk and bears with which the land abounded, should strongly stimulate men, whose subsistence and gains had hitherto in a great degree depended upon the fruits of the chace. But beyond this the productions and forms of external nature seem to have struck the early adventurers with wonder, when compared with those to which they were familiar on their side of the mountains.

The unexampled growth of the ordinary forest-trees; their frequent disposition over the soil in open woods, unencumbered with brushwood; the interminable cane-brakes, broken only by the narrow pathways trodden down by the bison and deer; the luxuriance of every form of vegetation, as it sprung from a virgin soil, whose fertility was as exhaustless, as its depth was extraordinary—all these things might well excite surprise. Then the fruits, the flowers;—the magnitude of single trees of the poplar or sycamore species, as their mighty shafts rose a hundred feet into the air, bearing with them their gigantic parasites; the numerous 'salt-licks,' frequented by the game of every species; the abundant springs and streams, and the extreme beauty of the sward in the more open country:—further their discovery in the depths of untrodden forests of huge artificial mounds and fortifications, covered with the growth of centuries and the extraordinary relics of a race of enormous animals buried under the soil—all combined to produce a species of unwonted excitement, and had their effect in nerving these men to the endurance of their perilous situation, as in small parties, or even singly, they sat down to spend days and months in the wilderness, totally cut off from all communication with their race. Such was the lot of Finlay, Boone, and others of the same stamp and mould, whose names will be for ever identified with the discovery and settlement of the West. From the pertinacity with which these men would cling to their discovery, it would almost seem as if their hearts misgave them, but that the whole might prove a delusion, and that if they returned over the mountains, they would never be able to find that rich, and pleasant, and fruitful land again.

However, the news soon spread among the frontier settlements of Virginia and the Carolinas. Stronger parties ascended and traversed the ridges of the Allegheny. The singular breaks, called Gaps, so frequent in them were explored; and within five or six years after Boone's first passage of the mountains, during which he and his companions had repeatedly made fearful experiences of the terrors of this terrestrial paradise,—a colony in which his wife and children were included, was settled in the newly discovered region. From this time up to the victory of General Wayne, on the Miami, over the Western savages, the country lay open to a steady tide of immigration from the East. But this interval of twenty years, and especially the earlier part, was one of infinite trouble and disaster to the new colonists both in Kentucky and Tennessee. That species of security which was consequent upon the first adventures on the Western side of the mountains being few in number, unexpected by the savages, and without any fixed place of abode—a security which had in many instances failed after a short time to be available from the naturally observant and practised eye of the Indian in following any uncommon trail; this was of course altogether at an end from the moment that parties of any number crossed the frontier, and commenced permanent settlements in the West. Self-defence was therefore the first object of the intruders. The new settlers had decided to live beyond the arm and government of the parent State, and they were consequently also beyond its protection, and had to depend entirely upon the goodness of God, and the vigilance of their own character and courage. Their little assemblage of log-cabins was accordingly surrounded by a tall strong stockade, to serve as a place of retreat and defence.

And in such isolated positions, open to the guile of the implacable Indian, exposed to famine from the destruction of their crops in the neighbourhood—worn out with sickness and constant watching—frequently attacked, and never sure of the duration of a time of apparent quiet—murders and burnings on every side—did the mothers of Kentucky brood over their little ones. Many of the infant colonies were exterminated, root and branch,—more were deserted, and the panic-struck inhabitants retraced their steps from the 'Dark and Bloody Ground.' To single combats, and skirmishes between the colonists and small marauding parties of the Indians, conflicts between larger parties gathered together for the attack and defence of a given post, followed; and more than once the numbers of the savages prevailed over the whites, and the strength and best defence of the colony seemed to be cut down to the ground. Prior to the year 1790, it is calculated that not less than three thousand persons were murdered, or carried into captivity in the West. Yet they struggled on. They were a peculiar race, and seemed to be fully nerved to their task. The pliancy of the female character, and the facility with which woman, despite her softer sex, will rise superior to the weakness of her nature, when circumstances imperatively demand sacrifice and exertion, were never more strikingly pourtrayed. She watched, and learned to read the signs which betokened danger, and to aid in repelling it. The very horses, dogs, and cattle scented the Indians, and gave warning of their approach by their signs of mute terror.

Still numbers poured into the country, allured by the known fertility of the soil; and where one settlement had been abandoned or destroyed, many sprung up. Waggon after waggon was seen climbing up the eastern steep; the proprietors cast their last look upon the sterile hills, and exhausted fields of the Old States, and then passing down the laurel-covered ridges to the land of promise, with slaves, children, and cattle, chose their ground, and fixed themselves in the wilderness. The parents, perchance, might look back in the hour of difficulty, to the land where they had lived, hardly perhaps, but in security, with something like longing and repentance; but the children grew up in the midst of the excitement of their position, with increasing fondness for the soil, and attachment to their new homes. Thus, farm after farm was brought into cultivation, and the Indian receded, till from their numbers and position, those furthest removed from the hostile lines began to taste the blessings of peace and security; hamlets succeeded to single houses; villages to towns; roads were made, and magistrates appointed, and the infant country taken under the wing of the parent State.

Still it was not till towards the close of the century, that there was peace on its borders. The Ohio, which formed the principal highway of the immigrants, was for many years the scene of the most horrible tragedies, the Indian still making his incursions from the northward, and using every art to harass the intruders. Open attacks, and decoys, in which the miserable whites already in their power were constrained under pain of death to allure the passage boats by piteous appeals to their compassion, and outcries for assistance, to approach the shore and fall into certain destruction, were alternately resorted to, till the strength of the Indian confederacies was broken by signal defeat and dispersion to a distance.

As soon as the country found peace and repose, the claims of the young for education, and that of all classes for the regular protection of the law, and for religious instruction were felt to be urgent.

Hitherto the want of some power to repress irregularities and punish the crimes, which could not fail to spring up with the increase of inhabitants, and under circumstances, which allured not only the enterprising but the vicious of the parent States, to settle beyond the mountains, seem to have given origin to a compact which was made occasionally among the more sober of the male inhabitants of each district, by which they assumed the power of both deciding upon the crimes of individuals and of awarding punishment. The Regulators, as they were called, I have every reason to believe, were an eminently useful race of men, and it may be maintained in most instances, just, withal; though it must be owned that the summary mode in which cases were disposed of, and even capital punishment administered without legal form, is a little startling to the sticklers for fixed laws, judge, and jury. As to religion, though many of the fathers of Kentucky seem to have been very far from immoral characters — their code seems to have been more that of the Indian, whom they dispossessed, divested of gross superstition, than that of the Christian; — and for that matter, Indian religion is of far greater diffusion through Christendom than might be imagined. The fashionable religion of the day is neither more nor less. Yet no sooner were families united, but a call for something higher was heard.

The want of a more settled provision for the spiritual guidance and instruction of the people, and their scattered position over such a vast extent of surface, gave origin to the 'Camp-meetings' of which you have doubtless heard. That mode of engaging in social worship was not only irreprehensible, but in every way praise-worthy, considering the purpose for which it was instituted, and the temper in which it was attended. But it is with that as with every thing human; and what was good and perhaps necessary at the time, is now, under a very different state of things, decidedly bad in most cases. Instead of the simple gathering together of a number of families under the thick shade of the forest, from every quarter of the compass, to one common centre, to listen to the word of God, offer Him their common supplication and thanksgiving, and have the sacraments administered in sincerity and sobriety; you may now see, assembled under the same name, and often in parts of the country where you would suppose that such a proceeding was wholly unnecessary, a crowd of thousands, most of whom, it may be said, without being accused of uncharitableness, meet for any purpose but that of devotion. Even the devotion that is seen in such assemblages, takes the air of religious excitement, and as to the rest, intrigue, dissipation, electioneering, chaffering, and cheating, hold their festival at the modern Camp-meeting. In fact, that arrangement as little suits the present settled state of the country, as the system of the Regulators would. I need not tell you that those self-appointed judges have long ago made way for men of worship and learning, who show reason for their authority, whatever they may do for their decisions. I am aware however, that something akin to the Regulators still exists in certain out-of-the-way corners of the Mississippi valley.

As to the fine race of backwoodsmen, of whom Boone seems by common consent to have been considered the patriarch, they were evidently raised for a special purpose, and that purpose accomplished, the country was too narrow for them.

We see him, the battle fought, and the country gained, entangled in the snares of the law, driven from that small portion of the rich heritage he and his fellows had secured to his countrymen, which he claimed as personal property, and in his old age, disgusted with the forms and hollow nature of society, once more shouldering his axe and rifle, turning his back upon the thickly peopled region, and followed by his wife, who, thirty years before, had been his companion in his first removal, seeking an asylum in the Far-West, beyond the Mississippi, where he died full of years in 1818.

LETTER VIII.

I NOW resume the thread of our personal adventures. Our stay at Cincinnati was only of two days' duration. We found the good citizens of that rising and flourishing city busily ruminating over the first edition of a well-known picture of their domestic manners, which the English press had just sent forth for their especial benefit. Whether the compote was justly and wisely compounded, I was in no way enabled to judge at the time, but it was very evident from the wry faces on all sides, and the aroused spirit of indignation, that the bitter herbs predominated over the sweet. For the rest, such was the crowded state of the only large hotel in the place, two having been burnt in the course of the spring, that we deemed ourselves fortunate to find a speedy opportunity of departure on one of the splendid steam-boats with which the landing place was crowded.

Our next halting-place was Louisville, another large and thriving city, situated on the Kentucky shore, just above the Falls of the Ohio. Its position on one of the great bends of the river, with the islands and rapids below, forms one of the most striking among all the beautiful scenes with which the Ohio abounds. Here we immediately took our passage for St. Louis on the Mississippi, seven hundred miles distant, on board another steam-boat, but were ultimately detained two or three days by some disarrangement in the machinery.

The Ohio truly merits the title of '*La belle Rivère*,' which was bestowed upon it by the first French settlers. Whether you see it from the summits of the little bluffs, through which it has delved a deep broad bed in this upper part of its course, filling the vale with its expanded waters, and laving the edge of those rich patches of alluvial ground on which the hand of man has spread the sunshine of cultivation among the overshadowing woods, or from the deck of the floating palace, which bears you with marvellous rapidity from basin to basin, and point to point, it is always 'the beautiful river.' Its current, at the time we descended it, was gentle, and comparatively clear, the waters being very low. Yet six months earlier, the whole of the valley of the Ohio, from Pittsburg to the Mississippi, had been the theatre of such devastation and distress, from the extraordinary floods, as to be almost incredible to those who, like ourselves, only saw the river flowing gently within her ordinary bounds. It was difficult to conceive, that such a wide broad bed, sunk thirty or forty feet below the edge of the perpendicular banks of the levels, should ever be insufficient to contain its water. But in the month of February of this year, after the fall of excessive rains in the mountains, at the head of the Allegheny river, the junction of which, with the Monogahela at Pittsburg, forms the Ohio, the waters rose foot by foot, and hour by hour, till the whole country was inundated. The flood attained its height at Pittsburg on the 11th, and at the Falls on the 19th, moving at the rate of about one hundred miles each day, and bearing forward the accumulated produce of a thousand farms, mills, and villages. At Cincinnati, the waters rose sixty-four feet perpendicular above low water mark. A still greater flood is on record, as having happened in the year 1772, before the settling of the country, but none since. The fertility of spring and summer had done much to remedy and conceal the devastation caused by this terrible visitation, yet many convincing signs remained of its power.

The time of our detention was as pleasantly spent as circumstances admitted of, but we were anxious to proceed, having much in prospect in another region before the close of the year. The shallowness of the water in the Rapids not admitting the descent of even the smaller steam-boats, we were constrained to pass through the newly-constructed canal, which, by the aid of three noble locks at the lower end, secures the uninterrupted navigation of the entire river, for vessels of moderate burden, without the delay of unloading, portage, and reloading, which was formerly necessary. All obstacles overcome, we found ourselves once more fairly afloat on the bosom of the river again, and straightway proceeded on our voyage. At the lower extremity of the canal, and before the small towns in the immediate vicinity, we left thirty or forty of the most splendid steamers of the first class, waiting for a rise in the water.

The changes which the successful adoption of navigation by steam has operated in a very limited space of time, upon the face of the wide regions watered by the Mississippi and its tributaries, are doubtless among the most extraordinary ever achieved by human agency.

Many things combined to make the year 1811 the Annus Mirabilis of the West. During the earlier months, the waters of many of the great rivers overflowed their banks to a vast extent, and the whole country was in many parts covered from bluff to bluff. Unprecedented sickness followed. A spirit of change and a restlessness seemed to pervade the very inhabitants of the forest. A countless multitude of squirrels, obeying some great and universal impulse, which none can know but the Spirit that gave them being, left their reckless and gambolling life, and their ancient places of retreat in the north, and were seen pressing forward by tens of thousands in a deep and sober phalanx to the South. No obstacles seemed to check this extraordinary and concerted movement: the word had been given them to go forth, and they obeyed it, though multitudes perished in the broad Ohio, which lay in their path. The splendid comet of that year long continued to shed its twilight over the forests, and, as the autumn drew to a close, the whole Valley of the Mississippi, from the Missouri to the Gulf, was shaken to its centre by continued earthquakes. It was at this very epoch in which so many natural phenomena were combining to spread wonder and awe, that man too, in the exercise of that power with which his Creator has endowed him, was making his first essay in that region, of an art, the natural course and further perfection of which was destined to bring about yet greater changes than those effected by the flood and the earthquake: and at the very time that the latter were agitating the surface, the very first steam-boat was seen descending the great rivers, and the awe-struck Indian on the banks, beheld the Pinelore[1] flying through the turbid waters.

From the time of the battle of the Miami, to which I alluded in my last, up to this epoch, the number of inhabitants in Kentucky, Tennesee, Ohio, and the adjoining States, had gone on increasing with astonishing rapidity, and swarms were pressing forward from the new settlements even beyond the Mississippi. The banks of the Ohio and its tributaries were covered with innumerable farms; and rafts, and flat boats, and barges of every description, laden with the produce, floated upon its wide surface, towards the general market of the West, New Orleans.

Besides the barges and vessels of heavy burden, which made their long annual voyage to and from that city, the river was covered, particularly in time of flood, by thousands of whimsical machines, for boats they can hardly be called, most of which have now disappeared. The greater part of these rude constructions were broken up, sold, or abandoned when the end of the voyage was attained, and the produce which they bore down to the general market disposed of; after which the settler returned to his farm a thousand or fifteen hundred miles off as he could. From seventy to eighty days were consumed in thus effecting the long and monotonous voyage from Pittsburg to New Orleans. But now a change was to be wrought in the facilities of communication between countries so far apart, upon which no one could have calculated, and the vast results of which are not yet fully developed.

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[1] The Chocktaw name for the steam-boat, literally 'fire-canoe.'

Circumstances gave me the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the particulars of the very first voyage of a steamer in the West, and their extraordinary character will be my apology to you for filling a page of this sheet with the following brief relation.

The complete success attending the experiments in steam navigation made on the Hudson and the adjoining waters previous to the year 1809, turned the attention of the principal projectors to the idea of its application on the Western Rivers; and in the month of April of that year, Mr. Roosevelt of New York, pursuant to an agreement with Chancellor Livingston and Mr. Fulton, visited those rivers, with the purpose of forming an opinion whether they admitted of steam navigation or not. At this time two boats, the North River and the Clermont, were running on the Hudson. Mr. R. surveyed the rivers from Pittsburg to New Orleans, and as his report was favourable, it was decided to build a boat at the former town. This was done under his direction, and in the course of 1811 the first boat was launched on the waters of the Ohio. It was called the 'New Orleans,' and intended to ply between Natchez in the state of Mississippi, and the city whose name it bore. In October it left Pittsburg for its experimental voyage. On this occasion no freight or passengers were taken, the object being merely to bring the boat to her station. Mr. R., his young wife and family, Mr. Baker the engineer, Andrew Jack the pilot, and six hands, with a few domestics, formed her whole burden. There were no wood-yards at that time, and constant delays were unavoidable. When, as related, Mr. R. had gone down the river to reconnoitre, he had discovered two beds of coal, about one hundred and twenty miles below the Rapids at Louisville, and now took tools to work them, intending to load the vessel with the coal and to employ it as fuel, instead of constantly detaining the boat while wood was procured from the banks.

Late at night on the fourth day after quitting Pittsburg, they arrived in safety at Louisville, having been but seventy hours descending upwards of seven hundred miles. The novel appearance of the vessel, and the fearful rapidity with which it made its passage over the broad reaches of the river, excited a mixture of terror and surprise among many of the settlers on the banks, whom the rumour of such an invention had never reached; and it is related that on the unexpected arrival of the boat before Louisville, in the course of a fine still moonlight night, the extraordinary sound which filled the air as the pent-up steam was suffered to escape from the valves on rounding to, produced a general alarm, and multitudes in the town rose from their beds to ascertain the cause. I have heard that the general impression among the good Kentuckians was, that the comet had fallen into the Ohio; but this does not rest upon the same foundation as the other facts, which I lay before you, and which I may at once say, I had directly from the lips of the parties themselves. The small depth of water in the Rapids prevented the boat from pursuing her voyage immediately, and during the consequent detention of three weeks in the upper part of the Ohio, several trips were successfully made between Louisville and Cincinnati. In fine the waters rose, and in the course of the last week in November the voyage was resumed, the depth of water barely admitting their passage.

When they arrived about five miles above the Yellow Banks they moored the boat opposite to the first vein of coal, which was on the Indiana side, and had been purchased in the interim of the State Government. They found a large quantity already quarried to their hand, and conveyed to the shore by depredators who had not found means to carry it off, and with this they commenced loading the boat. While thus engaged, our voyagers were accosted in great alarm by the squatters of the neighbourhood, who inquired if they had not heard strange noises on the river and in the woods in the course of the preceding day, and perceived the shores shake; insisting that they had repeatedly felt the earth tremble.

Hitherto nothing extraordinary had been perceived. The following day they pursued their monotonous voyage in those vast solitudes. The weather was observed to be oppressively hot; the air misty, still, and dull; and though the sun was visible, like a glowing ball of copper, his rays hardly shed more than a mournful twilight on the surface of the water. Evening drew nigh, and with it some indications of what was passing around them became evident. And as they sat on deck, they ever and anon heard a rushing sound and violent splash, and saw large portions of the shore tearing away from the land and falling into the river. It was, as my informant said, 'an awful day; so still, that you could have heard a pin drop on the deck.' They spoke little, for every one on board appeared thunderstruck. The comet had disappeared about this time, which circumstance was noticed with awe by the crew.

The second day after their leaving the Yellow Banks, the sun rose over the forests the same dim ball of fire, and the air was thick, dull, and oppressive as before. The portentous signs of this terrible natural convulsion continued and increased. The pilot, alarmed and confused, affirmed that he was lost, as he found the channel everywhere altered; and where he had hitherto known deep water there lay numberless trees with their roots upwards. The trees were seen waving and nodding on the bank, without a wind; but the adventurers had no choice but to continue their route. Towards evening they found themselves at a loss for a place of shelter. They had usually brought to under the shore, but everywhere they saw the high banks disappearing, overwhelming many a flat-boat and raft, from which the owners had landed and made their escape. A large island in mid-channel, which was selected by the pilot as the better alternative, was sought for in vain, having disappeared entirely. Thus in doubt and terror, they proceeded hour after hour till dark, when they found a small island, and rounded to, mooring themselves to the foot of it. Here they lay, keeping watch on deck during the long autumnal night; listening to the sound of the waters which roared and gurgled horribly around them, and hearing from time to time the rushing earth slide from the shore, and the commotion as the falling mass of earth and trees was swallowed up by the river. The mother of the party, a delicate female, who had just been confined on board as they lay off Louisville, was frequently awakened from her restless slumber, by the jar given to the furniture and loose articles in the cabin, as several times in the course of the night, the shock of the passing earthquake was communicated from the island to the bows of the vessel. It was a long night, but morning dawned and showed them that they were near the mouth of the Ohio. The shores and the channel were now equally unrecognizable, everything seemed changed. About noon that day they reached the small town of New Madrid, on the right bank of the Mississippi. Here they found the inhabitants in the greatest distress and consternation; part of the population had fled in terror to the higher grounds, others prayed to be taken on board, as the earth was opening in fissures on every side, and their houses hourly falling around them.

Proceeding from thence, they found the Mississippi, at all times a fearful stream, now unusually swollen, turbid, and full of trees, and after many days of great danger, though they felt and perceived no more of the earthquakes, they reached their destination at Natchez, at the close of the first week in January 1812, to the great astonishment of all, the escape of the boat having been considered as an impossibility.

At that time you floated for three or four hundred miles on the rivers without seeing a human habitation.

Such was the voyage of the first steamer. The natural convulsion, which commenced at the time of her descent, has been but slightly alluded to, but will never be forgotten in the history of the West; and the changes wrought by it throughout the whole alluvial region through which the Ohio and Mississippi pour their waters, were perhaps as remarkable as any on record. We hear less of its effects, because the region in which they occurred was of such vast extent and so thinly peopled. That part of the alluvial country which is contiguous to the point of junction of the two rivers, and especially the vicinity of New Madrid, seems to have been the centre of the convulsion. There, during the years 1811 and 1812, the earth broke into innumerable fissures, the church-yard, with its dead, was torn from the bank, and engulphed in the turbid stream. To the present day it would appear that frequent slight shocks of earthquakes are there felt; and it is asserted that in the vast swamp to the back of the town, strange sounds may at times be heard, as of some mighty cauldron bubbling in the bowels of the earth, Along the banks of the river, thousands of acres with their gigantic growth of forest and cane were swallowed up, and lakes and ponds innumerable were formed. The earth, in many parts was observed to burst suddenly open, and jets of sand, mud, and water, to shoot up into the air. The beds of these giant streams seemed totally overturned; islands disappeared, and in many parts the course of the river was completely changed. Great inundations were the consequence. The clear waters of the St. Frances were obstructed; the ancient channel destroyed, and the river spread over a vast tract of swamp. In many places the gaping earth unfolded its secrets, and the bones of the gigantic Mastodon and Ichthyosaurus, hidden within its bosom for ages, were brought to the surface. Boats and arks without number, were swallowed up; some buried by the falling in of the banks, others dragged down with the islands to which they were anchored. And finally, you may still meet and converse with those, who were on the mighty river of the West when the whole stream ran towards its sources for an entire hour, and then resuming its ordinary course, hurried them helpless on its whirling surface with accelerated motion towards the Gulf.

Six days were now employed by the steam-boat on which we had embarked in reaching St. Louis. For many miles below the Rapids, the river scenery continued fine but monotonous: the shores were often hilly and always forested, but never rose to any prominent outline; while every object on the banks was diminished to the eye by the vast breadth of the stream. The lowness of the water, the great changes effected in the channel by the spring floods, and occasionally morning mists, all conspired to interpose impediments to a very continuous progress. Besides, the boat we were in was only a third-rate. However, there was so much novelty in our position, that we bore all the misfortunes that fell to our lot with equanimity and fortitude, as became gentlemen 'travelling for pleasure and instruction.' We used to sit for hours in a little group on the high roof of the cabins, far removed from the heat of the fires and the boilers, the chatter of the passengers, or the jar of the engine; while the lapse of each second was marked by the sonorous rush of the white puff of steam from the pipe above our heads. Each little settlement we passed had its own peculiar interest, and each tributary stream no less—and there were scenes incident to the river which were always pleasing. The frequent landing-places, overshadowed by fine aged sycamores; the relics of ancient and whimsical craft still met with here and there—now a square or oblong box, floating along with the current, with the outline and the party-coloured vestments hung upon the shaft of the rudder oar brightly reflected in the water;—then the broad-horn of an emigrant family, lying in some sheltered cove, while the heterogeneous crew of all ages and colours were passing an hour of activity and relaxation on shore.

Though greatly diminished in number, you still meet with many an ark, for the transport of goods, built as a broad flat boat with a deck of two or three feet elevation above the level of the water. They have generally a small window fore and aft, and a door in the middle, a peep into which will show you a goodly store of pots, pans, or flour-barrels. A narrow ledge runs round them for the convenience of polling. A small chimney rises above; racoon and deer-skins, the produce of the hours spent ashore, are nailed on the sides to dry. The larger are generally propelled by four oars, and I have occasionally seen them surmounted by a crooked mast and top-mast. Here you will meet with one fitted up as a floating tin-shop, gleaning many a bright dollar from the settlers. Others again are of a still more simple construction, and have merely a temporary deck supported upon rails, through which the sheep and other live stock may be descried. Hay for their consumption will be piled above, and cabbages stowed away in a compartment behind.

Of the large barge, upon which the greater part of the valuable goods in request on the river were formerly transported, few are now seen in the lower waters. They required twenty hands to warp them up against the current at the rate of six or seven miles a-day, and were frequently of one hundred tons burden. The lighter keel-boat is still in use.

Farming seemed to be mere pastime,—the seed thrown upon the soil producing a thousand-fold with but little attention and labour, while the forest nourishes the cattle and swine of the backwoodsman without the expenditure of a cent.

On the earlier part of the voyage, occasional halts at the wood-yards were agreeable to all, as affording an opportunity for an half-hour's stroll: but when we descended below the Wabash, our opportunities of going on shore became a little too frequent. The high wooded bluffs ceased to border the stream after we had advanced one hundred miles below Louisville; and we were now following the river as it flowed in an expanded bed through that rich alluvial region in which it mingles its waters with those of the Mississippi. The villages were further apart, though we seldom paddled many miles without descrying the tops of Indian corn, and the fences, roofs, and smoking chimney of some backwood settlement.

The 'Illinois' was certainly not a fortunate boat, in spite of the horse-shoe nailed to the capstan. After many scrapings and bumps upon the sand-bars and shoals with which at low water the Ohio is becoming more and more impeded from the vast quantity of alluvion washed down into it since the partial clearing of the forests, it was our lot, somewhere above the remarkable cavern called the 'Cave in Rock,' to share the fortune of two other steamers, and get so irreparably shoaled about sunset, that, after many hours spent in attempting to extricate ourselves, by carrying out anchor after anchor, the use of the lever, and furious press of steam, it was decided, that whether the prospect were agreeable or not, the vessel must be partially unloaded, and for this purpose lighters were procured from the nearest settlement. After a glorious moonlight night, finding that many hours must elapse before there was any possibility of moving, we went ashore, and passed the morning in the forests of Illinois; and it was not till after a detention of twenty-four hours, that we got in motion again. Two more serious detentions, from a like cause, occurred at the mouths of the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers, after which we finally reached the mouth of the Ohio on the night between the 10th and 11th of September, and entered the 'Father of Waters.'

Our progress was now proportionably slow; that mighty river pouring downward towards the Gulf, a turbid and rapid torrent, in spite of its great breadth, and the low state of its waters.

By God's providence we escaped all the perils of the navigation, whether in the shape of sawyers, snags, planters, or sand-banks,—also a more sudden and unpleasant peril, from having been run foul of by a descending steam-boat in the night, without, however, suffering much injury, and arrived safe at St. Louis on the morning of the 13th.

I have found two reasons for hurrying over the details of much of our proceedings hitherto. The difficulty of choice among a mass of recollections and materials, which, however interesting, might not be altogether novel, may pass for the first; and as to the second, we have not yet done with the West, and opportunity and humour may be found at some future time for the introduction of such entertaining information as I have hitherto held back. I might give you twenty more reasons, and wind up by saying, that I have had neither time nor patience, which would remind you of the forty reasons given by a notorious gentleman, why he did not make a certain purchase, the last of which was—that he had no money; or what may be considered more pertinent, of the many reasons, philosophical, physiological, zoological, and osteological, said to have been given by Mr. Peale of the Philadelphia Museum, why, in opposition to the opinion of the learned, the great tusks of the enormous fossil Mastodon appeared therein with their points turned down; the last of which was, that the ceiling of the said museum was not lofty enough for him to place them with the points up.

I must also procrastinate with regard to St. Louis, for upon our arrival there, the Commissioner found that he had been long expected by several of the gentlemen more or less connected with his purpose of repairing to the westward; and with the exception of a morning which was set apart for a visit to Jefferson Barracks, to see the Indian Chief, Black Hawk, every hour of our brief stay was fully taken up with a variety of arrangements and preparations. By the defeat of the Indians at the Bad Axe River, and the capture of Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak, and his sons, together with the Prophet and other chiefs, the war carried on by the tribes of the Sauks and Foxes with the borderers of Illinois had been shortly before terminated. The Chief and his party were then in prison, and though kindly treated by his victor, was an object of interest and pity to us. The fine old warrior was then seemingly near his end, and drooped like the bird whose name he bore, when caged and imprisoned. Little did I then think that six months after I should see him alive and in freedom, on his 'progress' through the Atlantic cities after being set at liberty,—wondering at all, and wondered at by all.

Too many friends and advisers we found to be productive of great embarrassment, and after much, and to us most unnecessary palaver, it was finally determined that each should travel, as it best suited his convenience or fancy, to another point of rendezvous up the Missouri, namely, the small frontier settlement of Independence three hundred miles off. This was to be our ultimate point of union before turning south into the country occupied by the Osages and other Indian tribes. Colonel C. who had joined us here as our guide to the main seat of the Commission at Fort Gibson, made choice of his own mode and time of travelling with his domestics. The Commissioner with a medical gentleman attached to the party, decided to wait for a steam-boat which was expected to leave St. Louis for the Missouri in a few days; and as for Mr. Irving, de Pourtales and myself, we at once determined to purchase horses and a light waggon to transport our baggage, and travel as a trio, as heretofore, by easy day's journies to the place of rendezvous. Accordingly we furnished ourselves from the American Fur Company's stores, with bear-skins and blankets—after endless trouble procured horses, and pronounced ourselves ready to start. We had secured the services of a French Creole, accustomed to the country and mode of travelling, who was to serve us in the several capacities of guide, groom, driver, valet, cook, interpreter, hunter, and jack-of-all-trades; and as he became consequently a prominent character, you shall not have to complain of his being kept in the back-ground.

There are always some last words to be spoken, and some last things to be done at every departure of consequence. So it was with us, and as soon as one hole was patched up another was found; the horses had to be shod when they ought to have been on the road; and the waggon, though according to the custom of the times, warranted in good repair by the veracious seller, was no sooner put in motion, but it had to be mended by the purchaser. At length, on the evening of the 15th, we got fairly *en route*, and travelled about twelve miles over a horrible road to the Missouri, opposite St. Charles, where we found a shelter for the night in a little French inn, which, with its odd diminutive bowling-green, skittle-ground, garden-plots, and arbours to booze in, reminded us more of the Old World than any thing we had seen for many weeks.

LETTER IX.

THE following nine days were spent by us in steadily travelling westward, towards the place of rendezvous, through a country but sparingly inhabited by emigrants from the older states.

Previous to our departure from St. Louis, we had only just caught a glimpse of the face of our future guide and attendant, Antoine, or Tonish, as he was called by his familiar acquaintance. After his services were secured, he pleaded sundry indispensable preparations, and the natural desire to take leave of his family, for his immediate departure for the small village of Florissant, promising faithfully to meet us on the banks of the Missouri, opposite St. Charles; at day-break the following morning. But it was not till after passing hour after hour at the little French auberge, to which I brought you at the conclusion of my last, in vain expectation of seeing him arrive with a horse which we had agreed to purchase of him, upon strong recommendations from impartial people, who knew his super-excellent qualities, and testified to his being an undaunted buffalo-hunter,—and finally losing all patience, we had crossed the river about noon; that Tonish made his appearance, fully equipped, and gave us the first specimen of that dexterous effrontery with which we became at a later period extremely familiar. However, our party was now complete, and turning through the outskirts of St. Charles, we struck into the western road and pursued our journey; Tonish having charge of the waggon which held our small stock of necessaries; by which arrangement the three travellers were left at perfect liberty to saunter, halt, hunt, or do what they would. The tent, blankets and skins, which formed the main bulk of our baggage, were of no use to us in this earlier stage of our autumnal tour, as up to the point of rendezvous at Independence, we found that we might always depend upon reaching one or other of the scattered farms, both at the approach of night, and our noon-tide halt. Upon an average, we advanced about thirty miles a-day, which was as much as our steeds,—which to tell you the honest truth were none of the best—could well achieve, and a few general sketches of our journey may suffice.

Our route for the first week led us wide of the river, over an undulating country, the lower parts of which were thickly covered with forest, and the upper spread out into open prairie. Over these the decline of the year was beginning to shed those gorgeous and brilliant hues, which none can fancy or form an idea of, but those who have beheld them. The forests were fine, but not to be compared with the gigantic growth of those on the Ohio. I confess that at this time, their frequent interchange with the prairie was always welcome, as, after the novelty afforded by the peculiar character of the scenery of the latter had passed away, its monotonous, unvarying outline and bright colours were alike fatiguing to the eye and the fancy. We had not then conceived that admiration for this great feature of the West, which we afterwards did: indeed, we had not, during this early period of our western travels, any conception of the great variety and sublimity of the scenes, which they elsewhere exhibited.

We had every reason to admire the hearty hospitality of those, upon whose kindness and attention we were daily cast for entertainment and shelter. As the Constitution of Missouri sanctions the possession of slaves, it was a matter of course that the settlers were for the most part adventurers from the central and southern States of the Union, and principally Kentucky and Tennessee, and that in their buildings and family arrangements, they should imitate those of their fathers. The farms were ordinarily reclaimed from the forest, that being the richest soil. The dwelling-house usually appeared built substantially of round or square logs, all the interstices being neatly filled with white plaster, and they presented two quadrangular apartments, distinct from each other, with a wide open space in the centre, all covered by one common roof. In the better farms, one of the rooms was set apart for guests, and was clean, and furnished with three or four beds. The central division of the dwelling formed the ordinary sitting apartment of the family, and from its being open on both ends, was a pleasant cool retreat. As is the invariable custom of the southern states, the kitchen premises were in separate log-huts in the rear, the whole clearing being surrounded by a zigzag fence of chesnut rails, beyond which might be seen many an acre of tall Indian corn, rising under the girdled trees of the forest. Here the settler apparently lived in peace and plenty; cattle, swine, poultry, being abundant, and costing little or no toil or expense in raising, and that was indeed a poor farm which did not enable the good woman, with half an hour's notice, to spread before her guests a plentiful meal of ham, fried chicken, eggs, milk, honey, delicious butter, boiled maize, and hot wheaten bread. For the rest, venison and turkies were plentiful in the woods, besides innumerable squirrels, upon which we made war as we rode along.

There was one thing, however, connected with our daily repasts, which gave us some concern. The moment we signified our wish to be provided with a meal, was an evil one for the poultry; for as the arrival of travellers, though not an uncommon, was a very uncertain event, every preparation for their entertainment, even that of catching and killing the birds, had to be performed after arrival. The consequence was, that as soon as the black Clorinda, or blacker Juno in the kitchen received her orders, a strong detachment of the little woolly-headed urchins of every hue, which swarmed like musquitoes in this land of corn-bread and pumpkins, was upon the alert to secure two or three of the long yellow-legged cacklers within the fence. They were generally aided by a big dog, and not unfrequently backed by one of those noisy, garrulous, busy old negroes, who are to be met with every where, as privileged inmates of the family, in consequence of having known and cared for the master or mistress when children, and followed their fortunes from the Old States. The scene of confusion and the uproar consequent upon this hunt was indescribably ludicrous; although we had not yet become savage enough to gaze, without some qualms of pity and sympathy, upon these fugitive portions of our breakfast or supper, as they scudded from one corner to another, followed by a flight of missiles, or the nimble fingers of the grinning children. The devoted birds after flying here and there, would often as a last resort get under the house—the flooring being generally raised upon stones or logs about a foot from the ground—but no place was safe, for there the dogs would ferret them out, and it was really a relief to hear that they were relieved from their misery and terror.

The expectation of this scene often damped our ardour, while advancing cheerily through the forest to the place where we were to break our long fast: and we used to fancy, that, from the poultry having become aware by long experience of the imminent perils consequent upon the arrival of hungry travellers, we could sometimes, when just in sight of the farm, spy the whole flock, cocks, hens, and chickens, scudding off in a crowd as quietly as might be, into the tall maize field, or among the brushwood. Our sleeping quarters were frequently of the roughest description, but we travelled merrily and happily together day by day, and were conscious that we had yet rougher living before us.

As we proceeded, we began to observe many things which were new to us, such as the large flights of parroquets, frequent salt springs, and a sensible change in the productions of the forest. Among these the pawpaw tree, with its heavy luscious fruit, was the greatest curiosity.

The fourth day we crossed the 'Thirty Mile Prairie,' and on the fifth, passing almost wholly through interminable forests, reached the town of Franklin, near the Missouri. We here made a diversion from the usual road to Boone's-Lick, a large and productive salt spring, discovered many years ago by old Daniel Boone. Here he was accustomed to repair in his old age, when his strength would no longer bear him through the fatigues of the chase, to lie in wait, and shoot the deer as they approached near the spring.

The Missouri was subsequently crossed at Arrow Rock Ferry, and our line of route then lay wholly to the south of the river.

I recollect with delight our escape from a hot and crowded log-cabin, where we had been compelled to halt after dark and pass a restless night, and the following morning's ride over the open prairies.

I should despair of being able to convey any idea to your mind of the glories of the autumnal Flora, covering these immense natural meadows, like a rich carpet. God has here, with prodigal hand, scattered the seeds of thousands of beautiful plants, each suited to its season, where there are no hands to pluck, and but few eyes to admire. After the early grass of the spring begins to shoot up through the blackened surface of the scorched soil, it becomes spangled with a host of flowers, the prevailing colours of which are white and blue. These, as summer advances, give place to a race in which red predominates: and when the yellow suns of autumn incline over the west, their mild rays are greeted by the appearance of millions of yellow flowers, which, far statelier and of ranker growth than their predecessors, rise over their ruins, and seem to clothe the undulating surface of the prairie with a cloth of gold. The great predominance and variety of the *Heliotrope* and *Solidago* species, give this tint to the landscape, at the same time there are many showy and beautiful plants, products of the same season, of less glaring colours. Such are the *Astres*, from the large and beautiful species which displays its rich clusters of blue and purple flowers in the brake, to the small delicately leaved varieties seen on the more open grounds. You observe whole districts covered with the tall and striking flowers of the red or white *Eupatorium*, and every where among the long grass, the *Liatris*, or rattlesnakes'-master shoots up, and displays its spike of red flowers. Then there are the exquisite varieties of the *Gentiana* with their deep blue, and a thousand other flowers which I cannot undertake to describe. At this season, the dwarf Shumac, in hollows and on such parts of the prairie as have remained untouched by the autumnal fires, becomes a striking feature of the open grounds from the blood-red hue of its leaves and fructification.

The greater part of the road to Lexington, after traversing the river, lay over wide prairies.

When we were within a few miles of that town we met the long train of Trappers, which annually crosses the great western desert towards New Mexico, returning from the Rocky Mountains and Santa Fe; their mules laden with the skins for which they had dared that long and perilous pilgrimage. They were about seventy in number; men worn with toil and travel, bearing in their garb and on their persons evident marks of the adventurous passage of those immense prairies which lie to the Westward. Seven of their number had fallen in combat with the Indians on their return. These expeditions, however, hold out the expectation of such enormous profit, that adventurers are never wanting to fill the ranks.

Having heard nothing of the steamboat, we were not surprised on our arrival at Independence on the afternoon of the 24th, to find that we were the first at the place of rendezvous.

LETTER X.

THREE days yet elapsed before the members of our party were all assembled. The Colonel arrived the evening of the same day with ourselves, but the Commissioner and Doctor proved themselves the laggards of the party, and did not join us till the close of the third. They had met with 'moving accidents by flood and field.' You may remember they had resolved to ascend the Missouri in a steam-boat, and loss of both time and patience was the consequence. The waters of this mighty river were low; they stranded again and again, and finally had been obliged to leave the boat aground, about one hundred miles below Independence, and get forward through the woods as they might. Judging from the querulous tone which pervaded their remarks, we concluded that the journey had been far from agreeable.

However, such misfortunes are soon forgotten, and finding that we had not been idle in the interval, but had got pretty well advanced with the variety of new arrangements deemed necessary, it was resolved to prosecute our journey into the Indian country without delay.

But before we quit Independence, a few remarks upon our proceedings and occupations while there may be acceptable.

The town of Independence was full of promise, like most of the innumerable towns springing up in the midst of the forests in the West, many of which, though dignified by high-sounding epithets, consist of nothing but a ragged congeries of five or six rough log-huts, two or three clap-board houses, two or three so-called hotels, alias grogshops; a few stores, a bank, printing office, and barn-looking church. It lacked, at the time I commemorate, the three last edifices, but was nevertheless a thriving and aspiring place, in its way; and the fortune made here already in the course of its brief existence, by a bold Yankee shopkeeper who had sold sixty thousand dollars' worth of goods here in three years,—was a matter of equal notoriety, surprise, and envy. It is situated about twenty miles east of the Kansas River, and three south of the Missouri, and was consequently very near the extreme western frontier of the State. A little beyond this point, all carriage roads ceased, and one deep black trail alone, which might be seen tending to the south-west, was that of the Santa Fe trappers and traders.

I have felt a momentary temptation to give you a sketch of a deer hunt, in which we were engaged with a number of the sporting inhabitants of the settlement, but recollecting that, though very animated and exciting, it was unsuccessful, and that we have more hunting in prospect, I will let it pass.

It is advantageous to feel that you are a philosopher, even though you may be a sportsman, and that, whether your position be that of a solitary individual, strolling for hours with his gun, or the member of a party, the excitement is reward enough. As to myself, whether I return laden or empty-handed, I always return gratified.

On the morning of one of the days spent here in expectation of our friends' arrival,—mounted on Methuselah, an old white horse of the innkeeper's, and followed by a ragged water-dog, called Cash, I left my comrades and our horses to their repose at the town, partly for a morning's pigeon-shooting, and partly with the purpose of going down to the ferry on the Missouri, to inquire if any intelligence had come up the river with reference to the expected steam-boat.

After missing the path, and an hour's rough scramble in the thick forest, during which I found means to insinuate my steed, gun, and person, through many a tangled jungle of rope-vine, brush, and creeper, much to my own astonishment and that of the grave old quadruped which I bestrode, I descended the bluff which here rises precipitously from the bank of the Missouri, and reached the ferry. I met with no intelligence, but with an acquaintance from the town above, who proposed to me that we should ride together six or seven miles down the river, and call upon one of his friends, whose 'clearing' was situated at a point where the current is unusually narrow, and of difficult navigation. To this I readily acceded, as it would give me a better opportunity of observing the phenomena connected with this stupendous stream, than any I had hitherto enjoyed. Though geographically considered, I believe Mr. Flint is right in insisting upon the claim of the Mississippi to be considered the main river of the western region, in spite of its inferiority of length; yet, considered as a river, without reference to the peculiar geological formation of the continent through which it flows, there is no doubt of the pre-eminence of the Missouri.

The 'Father of Waters,' with his clear bright expanse and gentle current, is, in fact, swallowed up in the turbid and boiling volume of the 'Mother of Floods,' as she comes rushing in at right angles, upon the central valley, a few miles above St. Louis; and though it must be allowed that the southerly course of the Mississippi is preserved even after the point of junction, and the breadth of the latter is three times that of its mighty tributary—yet the attributes of the Lower Mississippi are in fact those of the Missouri.

No European can form an adequate idea of either of these great rivers, expanded like lakes, while their waters are seen rushing forward through the rich forested country like mountain torrents, tearing down the banks, changing their beds, and from their turbid colour, and the quantity of mud and slime with which they are heavily charged, having all the appearance of rivers in a state of extraordinary flood:—yet so they have boiled on from year to year and from age to age.

The turbid character of the waters of the Missouri has been frequently attributed to the volumes of earth and sand brought into it by the Yellow Stone, one of its largest tributaries; but it is ascertained to have the same character to the very gates of the Rocky Mountains, where it comes rushing through deep and perpendicularly walled defiles towards the great plains; and the fact seems to be established, that in those distant regions the unprotected surface of the earth is undergoing a gradual change, and is gradually being washed down by the action of the rains and ten thousand streams.

There are phenomena connected with the Missouri, and indeed all the great western rivers, which would appear at first consideration almost inexplicable. Among these, none is more remarkable than that presented by the comparatively small volume of water which they appear to contain at the points where they disembogue themselves, after a course of thousands of miles in length, and the reception of so many tributary waters. Take the facts connected with the Missouri. At the Mandan villages, two thousand miles from its sources, and sixteen hundred from the Mississippi, it is said to be as deep and as wide as at St. Charles, a few miles above its mouth. Yet within these points it receives a number of large tributaries, among which we may name the Platte and the Kansas rivers, the former of which brings down from a computed course of two thousand miles, a volume of water as large as that of the Missouri itself. River after river pour in their floods; yet however great, they appear to produce no effect on the main stream. Various causes are alleged in explanation of this, besides that of great evaporation. The whole bed of the Missouri appears to be a loose shifting sand, through which vast quantities of water are supposed to filter. Further, it is urged, that the wide alluvial tracts, in connection with the river, are based on a porous soil of sand and loam, which absorbs much of its volume; conveying large portions into the main valley of the Mississippi by subterraneous channels. In the same way it may be argued that the small quantity of water visibly entering the Gulf by the Mississippi, may be accounted for, by the quantity drawn into that great general reservoir, by many concealed drains of the same character.

The upward navigation of the Missouri by ordinary boats may be conceived to have always been a most perilous and arduous task, and even since the introduction of steam-boats, it is found more uncertain and hazardous than that of any other Western river. The vast length of its tributaries, and the distance of its sources, render it liable to frequent floods, of which three are always confidently looked forward to at certain intervals in the course of every year. The first rise that takes place is in the early spring, when the lower tributaries give forth their surplus waters in concert with the Upper Mississippi and her northern tributaries. A month later the Platte and other streams rising in the spurs of the Rocky Mountains, send their tribute to the eastward; and the greatest and most regular rise takes place in the course of June, when the accumulated snows on the Rocky Mountains yield to the influence of the sun, and the floods come pouring down from the 'head-waters' of the main River, over the great Falls, and joining those from the Yellow Stone. They swell the torrent, flowing through fifteen hundred miles of prairie, and advance day by day, till they gain the frontier of Missouri, and finally pour into the Mississippi. The rise of water in the latter river, at this time at St. Louis, is generally between five and fifteen feet.

During this latter period of flood, the navigation of the river, by steam, is safe and uninterrupted; and the American Fur Company's steamer, the 'Yellow Stone,' takes advantage of it to make its yearly trip to their factory at the mouth of the river of that name, eighteen hundred miles from the Mississippi. The duration of the voyage has ordinarily been from eight to ten weeks in ascending, and from ten to fifteen days in returning.[1]

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[1] In the summer of 1831, the 'Yellow Stone' ascended the Missouri, 1400 miles, but could not reach its destination. In 1832, they were more successful, and reached the factory, and in 1833, succeeded in ascending yet 300 miles further, being 2100 miles from the mouth.

It is impossible to note the facts which I have just alluded to, with regard to the distinct periods at which the waters from the several streams connected with both the Missouri and Mississippi are poured into the great valley of the West, without being struck with the great and compassionate providence of God, which by so dispersing the rivers which drain that vast extent of open country, over such various degrees of latitude, secures the valley from the yearly visitation of an overwhelming deluge. If all these mighty rivers were so situated, by similarity of length and position, as to break up simultaneously, there is no doubt but that the whole of the extended region, occupied by the alluvial lands, would be uninhabitable. But the deep snows of the Allegheny have sent their tribute to the ocean by the Ohio, before the icy chains which bind the waters of the Upper Mississippi are loosed; and the floods caused by these and the lower waters and tributaries of the Missouri and Mississippi have subsided many days, before the streams of the great Western Chain can from their vast distance, arrive with their contribution.

Resuming my narrative: Having rounded a noble and expanded bend of the river, in about an hour's time, we heard by the barking of dogs, and the chattering of many voices, that we were approaching the farm in question. The tall leafless boughs of a few girdled trees then appeared, and as we entered the opening on the bank of the river, we descried the rough log-huts forming the usual habitation of a squatter or backwoodsman. From the prominent appearance of a long table covered with dinner apparatus, which appeared arranged in the open air, a few steps from the door, a number of dogs whining and snuffing around it, and the unusual bustle among the negro dependants toiling about a small fire in advance, we suspected that something extraordinary was going on. A young negro took our horses with that affectation of extreme politeness and good breeding, which is so highly amusing in many of his colour, and which inclines me to think that they appreciate the character of a 'fine gentleman,' more than any other part of the community. The principal log-hut was built on a little level, half way up the steep bank impending over the swift and turbid river below. In immediate proximity to it, I noticed the broad, solid stump of a magnificent oak, which had been just felled, and lay prostrate, with his crown of foliage hanging over the bluff, a piece of labour which appeared to me so gratuitously unnecessary and wanton, that I could not avoid making a remark expressive of my regret, as its position was not only picturesque, but, I should have thought, of real utility to the huts under its shade. The reason given was characteristic, amounting to this, that it might one day fall on the dwelling.

We were met by the settler with the frank unceremonious bearing of his race. He informed us that his wife had got a number of her neighbours with her for a 'quilting frolic,' and made us heartily welcome. The interior of the log-hut presented a singular scene. A square table was seen to occupy a great part of its floor. It was surrounded by a compact body of females, whose fingers were occupied with all diligence upon the quilt which lay stretched out before them, and which, though neither the smartest nor costliest, promised,—judging from the quantity of cotton or wool which I saw stuffed into its inside, and the close lozenge-shaped compartments into which the latter was confined by rapid and successful gobble-stitching,—to be of real utility and comfort to the matron who presided, during the coming winter. A life in the woods teaches many lessons, and this among the rest, that you must both give assistance to your neighbour, and receive it in return, without either grudging or pouting. Accordingly, among other usages current among the back-settlers, the necessity and comfort of which each has learnt in turn, that of lending a free helping-hand in the spirit of kindness, is both a laudable and a natural one; and hence arises the custom of which I have given you a specimen, with others of a like character. A family comes to sit down in the forest,—they must have a shelter; and giving notice far and near, their neighbours for many miles round lay down their employments, shoulder their axes, and come in to the 'log-rolling.' They spend the day in hard labour, and the evening in good-humoured hilarity, and then retire through the forests, each to his own clearing, leaving the new-comers their good wishes, and an habitation. They frequently render one another the same service in rotation at harvest; and in the case under our eye, the outcry of the good woman for a quilt, had not failed to call together twenty of her neighbours, young and old; and many hands made light work. Like the generality of women brought up in the back-woods, they were reserved and silent before strangers. I should have said stupidly so, and that there was more harshness in manner than belonged to the sex under any circumstances; but I had before my eyes a proof that they were at least good neighbours, aud therefore thought their manners in this respect of little consequence. The meal which followed was plentiful and homely, and was dispatched first by the female and then by the male visitors, with that marvellous rapidity which is generally observable in the West; and, as I sat apart waiting till our turn should come, I was very much amused with the bustle of the scene. I watched the plates run the gauntlet from the table to the washing-tub, among a set of little negroes of all shapes and sizes, who all strove to act as preliminary scourers, much to the disappointment of the dogs who whined, whimpered, scratched, and pushed their sable competitors, and not less to the annoyance of the fat negress who acted as cook, and who, with lustrous visage and goggle-eyes, flourished her dish-clout over the tub in a fume of impatience.

The settler had in the course of the preceding spring bought three hundred acres of land of the State, at a dollar and a quarter per acre. He came to work upon it in the month of April, at which time the sound of the axe had never been heard in these forests. During the course of that month, he girdled the trees on ten acres—built himself a log-hut—and brought his family out from Independence. At the close of May, after burning the brushwood, and slightly breaking the surface, he sowed the ten acres, upon which the sun now shone freely, unobstructed by the dying spring foliage, with a bushel and a half of gourd-seed maize; and at the time of my visit in September, he showed me a crop upon the ground ready to harvest, of fifty bushels to the acre—the whole return being consequently, five hundred bushels for the one and a half sown. At the same time, the fodder yielded by stripping the tall stems of the maize of their broad and redundant leaves, amounted to a thousand bundles, sufficient to afford winter-food for fifteen head of cattle, which, during the summer had lived and fattened in the forest, with their compeers the swine, without being a charge upon the owner. Besides this produce, the field had yielded fifty waggon-loads of pumpkins, of which great use is made, both for the family, the negroes, and the stock. Such is the amazing fertility of this region, and the facility with which the necessaries of life may be procured! I have given you this single instance out of many of which I took exact and particular note.

When I add that the whole tract purchased was of the same inexhaustible richness of soil, covered with the most exuberant and noble forest, many trees which I measured being six yards in girth, abounding with excellent water and limestone, situated at a point where there would be no difficulty in transporting any quantity of produce to a market, you may well suppose that the owner cannot but become wealthy. There are reasons why many who are in equally favourable situations do not. Loss of health is very frequently the lot of those who occupy these teeming lands, and I have ordinarily observed, that the ease and little expenditure of labour and anxiety with which men of this class find themselves enabled to gain food and even superfluities, seem to unnerve their bodies, and unstring their minds. Many become listless and unenterprising, and lose that energy which can alone secure riches.

To return to the village, which I re-entered in the course of the evening, and our proceedings there.

At this time (with all humility be it said,) I held the perplexing but honourable offices of Commissary-general, and minister of finance to our mess. I could never rightly divine whether this was owing to the discovery which my comrades, Irving and Pourtales, had made of my superior skill and activity,—I certainly slept less than either of them—or whether their imposition of these dignities and duties on me proceeded from the simple and pure intention of sparing themselves extraordinary trouble of mind or body. Such, however, was the fact: and I was fully empowered to take care of our outward affairs—to buy and sell—higgle and haggle—chaffer and cheat, and be cheated, for the public good. In Independence, I had my hands full. I purchased bacon and knives and forks, salt, sugar and flour, coffee and camomile-flowers, pepper and potatoes, and a multitude of sundries, according to my own judgment, or their fancies and wants. But all these matters were trifles, compared with the strain upon the mind and conscience consequent upon the purchase of horses. Though I confess to you that this part of a gentlemanly and classical education had been strangely neglected in my case, I had already learned to look wise in the faces of those brought for sale—to speak knowingly and positively about their age—and though, after having had my fingers snapped at in St. Louis, I had grown rather chary of peeping in jockey style into the mouths of unknown steeds, yet I contrived to keep up my credit as horse-dealer after all; and now for your benefit, I will give you a lesson how to choose a horse for the desert. We will presume that a dire necessity exists for the purchase, and that time admits of no longer delay, and that this necessity is a matter of notoriety to every rogue for ten miles round. Not an old nag or irreclaimable horse can exist within that distance, but he will be straightway brought in from the forest, where he may have been scouted even by the wolves, brushed up, rubbed down, renovated and endowed with every marketable quality and virtue. Suppose yourself standing before Captain Warner's Hotel, in the rising city of Independence, and up comes a Yankee settler, Mr. Elisha Pike, with a horse to dispose of. You are perfectly aware of two things—first, that the animal must have grievous faults, else Mr. Pike would have sold him long ago; and secondly, that however great or grievous these faults are, you have now no choice but to purchase the animal. Your only object must be to save your credit as horsedealer. You see at a glance that whatever bargain you may contrive to make, it cannot fail to be a bad one. After the ordinary preliminaries, I advise you to place yourself for a few moments in speechless reverie (the less you speak the better,) about three yards in advance of the animal, and look him in the face. Then move slowly round him, muttering something about 'heaves'—'staggers'—'spavin'—and 'wall-eyed.' As you advance to your first position, you may hazard a question. 'Does he trot or break?' '*Ere a thing what you please,*' is the ready answer of Mr. Pike. 'Mr. Pike,' you proceed, 'I think his left eye waters.' '*A mere touch of the whip,*' responds the seller.

The price is asked and named. 'Too much by half,' Mr. Pike. '*Times aint now as they used to was,*' is the prompt rejoinder of the undaunted horse-jobber. After a moment's hesitation, if he looks tame, you may venture to stoop down and peep at his knees and his fetlocks, always trusting that he will not incontinently spring on your back. You may always safely mutter something about 'coming down;' or if you see he turns his toes out, express your fear that he is a 'speedy cutter.' The next thing is to desire the seller to bare his teeth. If he happens to have none, I should hardly know what to advise you to think, as there is no knowing with some of those Yankee steeds whether the deficit is to be ascribed to extreme age, or extreme youth; perhaps you had better not hazard an opinion, and resort to the main trial, which we generally had recourse to in despair. This is to take your gun and jump on his back. Then put spurs to him, and dash forward for half a mile at a hand-gallop over one of the rough, broken, stump-bestrewn roads leading through the forest, discharging your piece in mid-career; and depend upon it, if he neither comes down with you as he scrambles among the stumps, nor swerves at the report, you may after all venture to strike the bargain; hazarding no very decided declaration as to your reasons for so doing, and maintaining such a demeanour as may give Mr. Pike the impression that he has only overreached your pocket and not your judgment.

But, *plaisantrie à part*, as the last operation here, we exchanged or swopped for old Methuselah, value five dollars, the gallant steed sold to us by our worthy Tonish for forty-five dollars, but which we discovered to be so lame that the very day after the purchase no one could ride him. The only positively good quality of our new acquisition was that he was so deaf, that the discharge of a piece of ordnance would never have made him start, and his negative plea to be considered a horse of price, was founded upon his having belonged to the family of old Daniel Boone, in consequence of which Pourtales took a fancy to bestride him.

In the evening of the 27th I accompanied the Commissioner alone to the Shawanese Agency on the frontiers; and the following day we struck across the wide prairies to overtake our companions, who had meanwhile left Independence, cutting the Santa Fe traders' trail, and, finally bending more to the southward, hit upon that of our own party, which we followed till we found them encamped in the twilight in a low skirting of wood, under the edge of the prairie.

LETTER XI.

The following morning, by the time the grey dawn was brightening into daylight, our lengthened train might be seen issuing from the hollow in which we had passed the night, and proceeding over the rolling surface of the prairie beyond. The appearance of our cavalcade was far from being unpicturesque, and had I Chaucer's wit or Stothard's pencil, I might contrive to furnish you with a picture of almost as much interest as the 'Pilgrimage to Canterbury.' It is to be hoped that you will agree with me in accounting the time spent in the Far West, both this and the following year, as the most interesting portion of my late travels. I cannot suspect you of longing, like my other very sensible correspondent, to win me back from the sketches of character and natural scenery to which my own inclination and temper lead me, to the purlieus of alms-houses, the prices of beef and coals, and converse concerning parish beadles and overseers. If you should, the sooner you tell me the better,—in the meantime take a sketch of a day on the Missouri frontier.

Our cavalcade consisted of the Colonel and his two servants, viz. a black boy William, and a little thin lack-a-daisical Frenchman named Prevôt, who generally took charge of our two waggons while on the march; then the Commissioner, the Doctor, Washington Irving, Count Pourtales, and your humble servant, and lastly our scape-grace Tonish, together with another half-breed, whose services were principally required to care for a number of led horses.

Slight traits may suffice to delineate the principal personages.

The Colonel, whom we considered for the time being the head of the party, generally led the van; a fine, good-humoured, shrewd man, of French descent, with claims both to fortune and family in Missouri. As our conductor, we were all beholden to his courteous manners, and extensive information on every subject connected with the country and its red inhabitants, for much of our comfort and entertainment. In the pursuit of his profession of Indian trader, he had often dared captivity and death. Among the Osages, whose principal trader, and organ with government he had long been, he was supposed, and I believe justly, to possess the greatest influence. In fact, he had been brought up from his early boyhood, more or less in their camps; had hunted, feasted, fought with and for them, and was considered by them as a chief and brother. From him we were glad to take our first lessons in hunting, camping, and backwoodman's craft, and enjoy our first peep at that kind of life, which, judging from his fine vigorous person, and the health shining on his sun-burnt features, was, with all its hardships, congenial to health and good humour. He was to be our guide to the Western Creek Agency, about three hundred miles to the southward. The Commissioner, with whom we had long become intimately acquainted, was worthy of the respect which all entertained for him. His kindliness of spirit won our regard; and we all did justice to the singleness of purpose with which he, a happy husband and parent, and truly a lover of quiet, had left his family and the comforts of an Eastern home, to become a peace-maker among the rude tribes and inhabitants of the West.

The Doctor was, I am happy to say, quite an unnecessary appendage, and I believe he would have felt no disappointment, had his lot been cast otherwise, as this kind of adventurous life was not consonant with his tastes. He had not made up his mind to all those petty troubles which are unavoidable beyond the pale of civilization, and you will always find that such men are sure to meet with more mischances than their neighbours. As to our trio, I need say nothing here, but pass on to the domestics, a far richer field for description.

The black boy was only distinguished by his good-nature, and by his sleeping like a racoon, while he held the reins and pretended to drive. The Colonel's little French retainer, Prevôt, was the scape-goat of the party. He had certainly been born under some very unfortunate aspect of the heavenly signs, and seemed unable to shake off their malignant influence. Nothing could be more diverting to others, than the composed melancholy which seemed to reign in his features and sentences, as his weak nasal voice was heard in the brake, or at the camp-fire, deploring his unhappy lot. Did a horse kick—Prevôt's shin-bones or fingers bore testimony to the fact. Did it happen that the passage of a rivulet was difficult for the waggon,—look but back, and you might be sure that the legs and skirts disappearing in the brushwood, as the possessor tipped back from the inclined seat, were the appurtenances of little Prevôt: and so to the very end of the journey, when we left him on the Neosho with a terrible catarrh.

These worthies, however, will all be forgotten ere long, and probably you may hear no more mention made of them, but Tonish will not so soon sink into oblivion. Light, active, in the prime of life, no horse could take him by surprise; no inclined plane could throw him off his balance. He was a man of no mean qualifications. Full of make-shifts, and unspeakably useful in the woods, they were his home. A house was an abomination to him, and he was at a loss what to do with himself when he got within one. He possessed, however, a wife and family at Florissant, to whom his visits would seem to have been 'few and far between.' He was garrulous to excess, in spite of an impediment in his speech, in the form of a barrier, which it was necessary to break down by an effort, after which the words composing the meditated sentence, came tumbling out headlong. He was a weaver of interminable stories, all about himself and his hunting exploits. We soon found out that he was a most determined and audacious braggart; but it was some time before we all came to the unanimous conclusion, that, for lying effrontery, none of us had ever seen his equal. In fact, such was the ingenious and whimsical way in which he would bring a host of little lies to cover a big one, that it became a matter of amusement with us to watch his manœuvres.

Following our march as fancy dictated, or stowed away in the rear of the waggons, we had a train of eight dogs, all belonging to the Colonel, who was something of a humourist, and accordingly they all had appropriate names, dictated by love, hate, and political feeling, among which, note Henry Clay, a greyhound; Jackson, a bull-dog; and Mrs. Trollope, a hound with a number of whelps.

In the south-westerly course which we now followed, the farms or clearings were few in number, and of rare occurrence; the general character of the country being that of wide open prairies with long lines of timber trees skirting the course of the creeks and rivers, many of which rose in this elevated corner of the country. The road was merely a track over the natural sod of the prairie, and though practicable in the dry season for such light four-wheeled vehicles as those in our train, the swollen state of the streams often rendered it impassable for weeks.

Our mode of proceeding was pretty uniform. We struck the tent early; travelled about fifteen or twenty miles at a sober pace, after which we made halt for an hour, allowing the horses to pick up a little food, and then proceeded ten or twelve miles more, till about an hour before sun-down, when we sought a convenient camping-ground affording wood, grass, and water. This was the general order of the day's march. If a suitable spot was found in the neighbourhood of one of the scattered farms, it was well; if not, no one lamented it, for we were much more comfortable and at home in the forest, than under the crowded roof of the settler. We had always egregious appetites, plenty of provisions, absence from care, and sound sleep on a bear-skin, and what more could we wish.

Many of our encampments were eminently picturesque, but as I may have subsequently much of this kind of life to describe, I will not now allude to any in particular.

You may suppose us drawing towards the close of a day's journey, and the sun sinking fast towards the western horizon. The broken line of the cavalcade, the great intervals between the horsemen, the waggons toiling far in the rear, and the difficulty of keeping the spare horses on the track, as they seize upon every opportunity to diverge from it, to feed upon the rank grass,—all betoken the propriety of making choice of our night-quarters.

The stream and creeks, meandering among these vast prairies, are generally deeply sunk, and bordered by a belt of rich forest, of greater or less breadth, and upon such our choice always fell, as we had here wood, water, shelter, and fodder for our steeds. If possible, we halt before the sun is down, that we may get everything comfortably settled before night-fall, chosing an open space among the trees, within a stone's throw of the water.

The spot being fixed upon, we drive and ride in among the tall grass and dismount: each unsaddles his steed, hobbles it, as the term is, by tying the two fore-feet close together, and sends it hopping into the forest like a kangaroo, crashing and scrambling through the gigantic and entangled brushwood, which rises under the heavier timber. Here, at this season, they feed upon the pea-vine, a very nutritious plant which abounds in all the wooded alluvial grounds or 'bottoms' of the Western Prairies.

As soon as this first duty is performed, we think of ourselves. While the half-breed and the black cut wood, Tonish makes a fire against some fallen tree or log, and flits to and fro in the smoke, like a goblin, while preparing his poles and spits for cookery. Meanwhile other hands are employed in pitching the tent, and lay down the bear skins and blankets within or without, as suits convenience.

By the time this is all fairly arranged, and our arms and accoutrements are carefully hung around, night has closed in; and the fire gleams bright and cheerily upon the huge trunk of the oak, butter-nut and beech, which rise from the tall jungle of towering weeds springing around us far over our heads.

Tonish is now by far the most important personage, and we, in common with Henry Clay, Jackson, Mrs. Trollope, and the rest of the lick-lip fraternity, await the result of his operations.

Now and then Clay advances his sharp nose too near certain tempting spits, which, stuck into the earth, and leaning towards the bright embers, support slices of savory venison, the plump prairie-hen, or squirrel, and gets a sudden knock upon it from Tonish's knife-handle. Jackson stands doggedly under the tail of the nearest waggon, with goggle eyes sparkling in the fire light, in eager expectation of the coming feast; and Mrs. Trollope keeps up a constant snarl at her four whelps, as incited by the maternal example, they push their noses from underneath the saddles, and from behind the great log, towards the point of general attraction.

At length the Colonel's sonorous voice is heard, '*Messieurs, le soupé est paré!*' and each, rousing himself to the willing toil, contrives a seat round a tent cloth, and partakes of the banquet. And banquet it was, for we lived at this time like princes, as coffee, biscuit, and bread, were plentiful in the camp, in addition to our other luxuries, among which I would recount that despised dish, fried pumpkins.

Then follows the second table, at which the dogs think themselves entitled to partake, and the half-breed and the black are kept busy in alternately bestowing right-handed morsels to their own mandibles, and left-handed thumps to Henry Clay and company.

The table withdrawn, we sit half an hour round the fire, listen to each other's tales, and, between whiles, to the distant howl of the prairie wolf, the shriek of the owl, the chirp of innumerable grasshoppers and crickets, the cry of the bustards going to sleep in the neighbouring marsh, or speculate upon some odd nondescript out-of-the-way noise in the deep forest; till in fine, growing gradually sleepy, we steal off to rest.

I cannot say that silence always held her sceptre over us, even when sound asleep, for little Prevôt and the black snored so loud, that the dogs would sit up and bark at the noise,

Long before day-break there was generally a wakeful spirit amongst us; the fire was stirred up—the breakfast prepared—the horses caught and brought into Camp, and before sun-rise we were on the road again.

LETTER XII.

The character of the country, over which our whole journey from Independence to the Arkansas river was effected, with the exception of a few casual settlements where cultivation had changed the natural face of the soil, was that which distinguishes the whole of that immense territory between the Missisippi and the Rocky Mountains. We skirted for several days the eastern limits of those boundless plains which know no settled inhabitants, and over the other extremity of which, at five or six hundred miles distance, the gigantic summit of Mount Pike serves as a land-mark to the scouting Indian or trapper.

The scenery exhibited by these vast grass-covered Prairies, with but the occasional break afforded by a wooded creek, is monotonous to a certain degree; yet as all those over which we passed belonged to the class called 'rolling prairies,' where a constant gentle elevation and depression of the soil gives some variety, besides inducing a variety in the character of the vegetation, we did not find our journey wearisome. You may have some idea of this class of open country, by recollecting the general outline of our higher and more extensive moorlands—allowing your fancy to clothe them with a deep rich soil, instead of dark peat, and with a carpet of the brightest flowers and grass from six inches to six feet in height, according to circumstances, instead of monotonous purple heather.

The creeks were abundant in this part of the country, so that we were rarely out of sight of trees at a greater or less distance from our line of route, but as much as thirty miles were passed without seeing any. Here and there the country swelled up to a higher level than ordinary, into singular ranges of lime-stone hills, surmounted by what are called 'flint knobs,' which rise not unfrequently some hundred feet above the general level of the country. Over such a chain, called the Mounds, we passed on the last day of the month, and were greatly struck with the regular form and mould of the southernmost excrescence in particular, which rose up in the exact form of a truncated cone. No feature of the Western country has been more striking and embarrassing to me, than its natural and artificial mounds, of which there exists a regular chain, from such as this just mentioned, about which we feel convinced, in spite of its singular position and regular form, that God was its only artificer, to those whose immense size and shapelessness are attended with incontrovertible proofs that they are wholly the work of human hands.

We made a halt of half a day in the Mission settlement of Harmony, an establishment under the direction of the American Board of Missions. It is situated on the banks of the Great Osage river, about seventy-six miles from the village of that division of the Osage tribe known by the name of the Band of White Hairs. In both this and the sister settlement of Union on the Neosho, which we passed a week later, it appeared that the ends aimed at by the Missionaries, were chiefly the establishment and maintenance of a school for the Indian children, and the introduction of a taste for agriculture, and that their views of usefulness were limited to these objects.

At the time of our halt the settlement was surrounded by a number of strolling Indians of the Piankishaw tribe, and these excited the more interest, as they were the first of the Children of the Forest we had seen in the vicinity of their own settlements, and in their own guise. Among the men there were many fine picturesque figures; but the mixture of Indian and European costumes was strikingly grotesque. The apparel of three warriors, whom curiosity attracted to us during the morning, may give you an idea of Indian taste and coxcombry. The oldest, Big Fish, appeared clad in the usual Indian leggings and mocassins or shoes, of tanned deer-skin, and his smoke-stained blanket was thrown negligently over a soiled cotton shirt, furnished with a superabundance of frill, while his head was enveloped in a shawl-turban of gaudy colours. The second of the group wore a fanciful green cotton shirt under his blanket, his lower limbs being clothed like those of his fellows; but he depended upon the paint lavished upon his dark features to win the hearts of the squaws in the train, having adorned himself with bright blue and vermillion in two irregular square patches, the one on the left temple, and the other on the right eye. The third was really a handsome fellow, with a bunch of stained eagle feathers on his crown, a dark blue shirt, blanket, and red cloth leggings. Their squaws were hideous to behold.

The day after we passed Harmony, our route, which had hitherto lain within the Missouri line, crossed the frontier by bearing more to the west, and we entered the country then appertaining to the Osages. As we advanced, the surface of the prairies became more and more stony.

My general custom during this portion of our tour, was every morning, as soon as I had saddled my horse, a duty which each took upon himself, to shoulder my gun, to leave the encampment on foot, both for the sake of varying the mode of travel, botanizing, and the chance of meeting with game, before the noise of our advancing train should have driven it at a distance from the path. At this early hour the sweetness and freshness of the air was indescribably delicious, and though the gaudy Flora of the declining year was in a great measure void of perfume, yet it seemed as if every sense partook of enjoyment. It is just at this time when the sun's level beams begin to warm the dank surface of these wide meadows, that the air is filled with the mournfully sweet and glassy notes of the yellow-breasted Meadow lark, as she rises from her covert in the tall grass, and flies as you advance from one tuft of wild indigo to another. It is then that groups of that fine species of grouse, the Prairie-fowl,[1] are to be seen sitting upon the trampled sod of the track, sunning themselves, while with outstretched neck and expanded ruff the watchful cock bird gives careful notice of the approach of a human foot. It is then that the deer may be met with, bounding to covert; and that the white and black autumnal moths are seen fluttering among the flowers and grass in myriads.

As the sun gets higher, the falcon may be observed on the alert, with his level wing and piercing eye, slanting along the trail, peeping into every rut, and prying into every tuft of grass for the grouse, who instantly bury themselves in the wilderness of plants, and thus escape his rapacious gripe. At the same time the moths disappear, and in their place numbers of winged grasshoppers, yellow, green, and red, rise from the side of the road, take their short flight of half a dozen yards, play the butterfly for an instant, and then drop heavily among the flowers.

I believe it was on the afternoon of the second of October, that we arrived at the limit of a long swell in the country of greater elevation than ordinary. An old Osage warrior of the Grey Hairs' Band, whose name was 'the Destroyer of cities;' alias, 'the Burner of Wigwams,' then attached to our party, and acting as our guide, was riding at the head of our small column. When he arrived at the brink of the ascent, he paused, reined in his poney, and turning half round as he beckoned us forward, spread his arms, signifying to us the wide expanse that burst upon his sight; and that this broad extent of country, dimly descried in the deep red haze, was the present domain of his tribe. And truly, that apparently illimitable ocean of meadow, wreathed in the smokes ascending from a hundred burning tracts, with its numberless lines of forest, stretching like capes and promontories into it, mingling with the dun and misty horizon, towards which the sun was sinking like a glowing ball of fire, formed a sublime scene.

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[1] Tetrao pratensis.

His tribe had broken up from its summer residence on the Neosho; the warriors forming the great hunting party had gone off with their chief towards the Buffalo-range and the great Salt Plains, many days' journey to the westward, for their autumnal hunt; and the rest of the band was dispersing to their several hunting-grounds within the limit of their own territory.

The following day, as we proceeded southward, we saw ourselves surrounded by the smoke of their fires. It rose on every hand, over the level horizon of prairie, or through the forest along the creeks. About noon many groups appeared in sight, pursuing their way in long files or in single small bodies over the country, with squaws, pappooses, and laden ponies.

With the exception of a blanket and a few ornaments, there was little European clothing observable among the males. The warrior was generally seen marching first with his firm straight step, and upright bearing, burdened with nothing but his rifle. Many of them were good specimens of the North American Indian 'brave,' and wore the head shaved, with exception of the scalp-lock on the crown, and painted vermillion. In general, they were tall, and in a certain degree martial in gait and bearing—yet though straight-limbed, too spare to be handsome. The countenances of the squaws, on the contrary, after true savage fashion, were bent towards the earth, from the burden of skins or other articles imposed upon their shoulders, and secured in its position by a strap of leather over the temples. The Indian ponies had also their burden of baskets and utensils—and the round head and glistening eyes of many a little pappoose bobbed up and down among the motley bundles, of which the load was composed;—the boys and elder children brought up the rear.

At this time, our encampments were continually surrounded by this tribe. The moment the Indian proclaimed a halt to his family, he drew to one side—grounded his rifle—twisted his blanket closer over his attenuated person, and looked on with listlessness and apathy at the labours of the squaws, who meanwhile were busily employed in bending the twigs of the underwood into a skeleton hut—covering them with mats and skins—making their fires, and cooking. In every thing they seem to be the drudges of the males. As to personal appearance, with very few exceptions, I can only specify three degrees,—horrible—more horrible—most horrible!

Of all the Indian tribes at which we got a glance, this and the following year, the Osage came nearest to our idea of the North American Indian. The southern Indian struck us as being more effeminate; and the more northern tribes, though I own they were in appearance far finer specimens of manly beauty, yet wanted much of the dignity of march and demeanour of the poor Osage. He is truly the child of the desert; and while the Creek and the Cherokee, whom circumstances have brought into his neighbourhood, are in some degree showing an inclination to bend to their circumstances, and cultivate the ground, and may attain to a certain degree of civilization; the Osages still scorn the alternative of labour to famine. Their Great Father at Washington sends them milch cows, draught oxen, and farming utensils, and delegates to instruct them in their management and use. The Missionaries provide schools, and by labouring themselves, attempt to show that labour and freedom are compatible with each other. The squaw is cajoled to send her son to school; but what is the consequence of all these well-meant attempts to civilize them? The cows are killed to get the milk—and the oxen are killed because the Indian cannot see the wisdom of starving while so much food is walking about. The Indian attempt at ploughing, which begins with seven able-bodied warriors assisting the coulter in its operation, ends with the machine being broken or thrown aside in disgust. The Agent, who, seeing the impossibility of getting them to do any thing when the object is not manifest and of speedy fulfilment,—incloses a large tract, sows it with maize, keeps it in his own hands till ripe, and then, summoning the band, says:—'My brethren! your village is composed of twenty lodges—here are twenty acres of ripe corn—take it and divide it justly.' The chiefs grunt their approbation—'It is all good—very good!' The satisfied Agent goes to bed, and when he gets up at sunrise the next morning, sees three hundred hobbled horses eating, fighting, and trampling the corn into the earth; one of the joint possessors having had the bright idea that by hobbling his horse and putting him into the field, the share appertaining to him might be gathered without any manual labour or mental exertion on his part; a felicitous idea, which is soon hailed and followed by the rest. This is a fact! Again—instead of feeling under an obligation for the instruction offered to their young, the Osage father thinks the boy ought to receive wages for going to school. Even in the case, when the Missionaries, through circumstances, have contrived to keep a young Indian half-breed (for a full-blood Indian can hardly ever be detained beyond childhood) for a few years, and given him some insight into the most common laws and uses of agriculture: the only consequence is, that when he goes back to his tribe, he is worth nothing—he is neither able to subsist in the manner of the Pale-faces, nor to hunt with his red brethren, and frequently becomes an outcast. Yet though this seems to be the unsuccessful issue of most attempts to civilize the Osage—I am aware that there is one trial making on the Neosho, by a person of great tact, prudence, and Christian principle, where he has a fine fertile tract under his own cultivation, and the control of a small band of Osages, which promises well. But few of his Indians join the great spring and autumnal hunts, or the war parties of the tribe—and that is certainly a proof of success; for in general, you might as soon expect the young wolf, whom you bring up from a cub, in apparent gentleness and attachment to your person, to remain so, when, having come to his full strength, he has once strayed beyond his chain—seen the round moon—snuffed the night air—and heard the howl of his compeers in the mountains;—as you can that the young Indian should lie by and labour the earth with the spade and harrow, when he sees his brethren dance the buffalo-dance and turn their faces to the broad desert—or hears the war-whoop of his tribe. For the rest, the life of the Indian is well known, and I need not dwell upon it.

I have noticed elsewhere the determination entertained by the government of the United States to remove all the scattered remnants of the Indian tribes dwelling on their reserved lands in the different parts of the Union east of the Mississippi, to the country west of the same great river. At the time of which these Letters treat, this had been in a great measure effected, and by the sale and cession of their lands to the east, many tribes found themselves dispersed upon the frontier, from about the 91st to the 95th degree of latitude in the Missouri and Arkansas Territory, while yearly additions have since been made to their number. Thus, portions of the Creeks, Cherokees, Chocktaws, Quoppaws, Delawares, Senecas, and Shawanees, with many minor tribes, were ranged along that parallel; the Osages forming, as it were, the advanced line. The Seminoles of Florida, by this time, have left their homes on the waters and barrens of the Peninsula, and have gone to sit down on the edge of the great desert, by the side of their brethren the Creeks. The three first-named tribes certainly hold out a promise of the gradual attainment of civilization,—many not only cultivating large tracts, but holding in their own persons many slaves, and living altogether by agriculture. They may become permanent possessors of the soil they now cultivate. The recent invention of written characters, by a full-blood Cherokee, consisting of eighty-four signs, expressing all the dominant sounds of that language; and the great number of half-breeds among them, are both favourable to this change of life. The best proof that they are advancing from their savage state to a higher grade, is that their numbers increase; while almost all other Indian tribes spread over the American Continent far and near, are known to diminish in number so rapidly, that common observation alone enables any one to predict their utter extinction before the lapse of many years.

There are certainly causes operating to produce this ultimate disappearance of the red tribes of America, which are not fully understood. It is pretty well ascertained, that at the time of the discovery of this continent, their numbers were diminishing, and the same is observed at the present day of tribes, as yet far removed from either direct or indirect influence of the white man. However, we need not seek for hidden causes why those in contact with European blood should wither and eventually pass away, leaving no vestige behind them.

The gifts which the Pale-faces brought to the Children of the Forest have indeed been fatal ones, and by them the seeds of misery and death have been sown to a terrible extent.

I do not believe that at the time they first saw the vessels of the discoverers and their followers come over the Great Ocean, they were either a happy race or one of simple habits. The life of fierce extremes which they were even then found to lead; the close acquaintance with all the extremities of war, disease, and famine, which even then they endured; the uncontrolled sway of violent passions; the degradation of their women, all tend positively to contradict the supposition that this might be or was the case. Whatever may have been written, said, or sung, they were never the rivals of the Arcadians. Their system of religious faith was, it is true, perhaps in itself, the purest that has any where been found among savages, and eminently distinguished them from their neighbours to the southward. Their faith did not, perhaps, like that of many heathen nations, aggravate and stimulate the force of their animal passions; but it does not seem to have had power to check and chasten them.

What the influence of their contact and intercourse with the European has been, we all know. Where he found them poor, he left them poorer; where one scene of violence and vengeance has been seen, there many have been enacted; where he had found one evil passion, he planted many; where one fell disease had thinned their ranks, he brought those of his blood and land to reap a more abundant harvest. His very gifts were poison: selfish and inconsiderate in his kindness, he was ever bitter in his revenge and anger: he excited the passions of the savage for his own purposes, and when it raged against him, he commenced the work of extermination. He then read that the day of the aboriginal inhabitant of the soil had come, and that the white man was destined to take the place of the red, and perhaps he divined well and truly; but he had no right to presume upon it, or that he was to be the active instrument in forwarding that mysterious dispensation of God.

We read the history of the conquest of the provinces in the southern division of the Western Hemisphere and the Islands, and execrate the bloodthirstiness of the Spaniard, who exterminated whole tribes at once by the sword, under the banner of the blessed Cross; and yet the conduct of the Pilgrim Fathers and their children towards the aborigines of the North is hardly less culpable or less execrable. Like the Spaniard, the Puritan warred under the banner of his faith, and considered the war as holy. No one who reads the history of these countries since their first settlement, can draw any other conclusion, than that the white man secretly, with his grasping hand, selfish policy, and want of faith, has been in almost every case, directly or indirectly, the cause of the horrors which he afterwards rose openly to retaliate. How often did he return evil for good! That the wrath of the Indian, when excited, was terrible, his anger cruel, and his blows indiscriminate, falling almost always on the comparatively innocent; and that defence, and perhaps retaliation then became necessary to save the country from repetitions of those fearful scenes of murder and torture which make the early settlements a marvel and a romance, is also to be allowed:—but the settlement of the various portions of America, with but few exceptions, is equally in the north and the south a foul blot upon Christendom.

But the evil is now done, and unfortunately irreparable, in that part of the continent of America in which I am now writing to you. The Indian tribes have melted like snow from before the steady march of the white, and diminished in number and power, beaten back, they first gave way and retired beyond the Mountains, and then beyond the Great River and to the westward of the Great Lakes. If you ask, where is that noble race whom Smith found in Virginia, the race of Powhatan, which then overspread that fair country between the Alleghany and the sea?—where the powerful tribes of the East,—the posterity of Uncas or Philip,—the white man's friend or the white man's foe,—or the tribes that clustered round the base of the White Mountains?—the same answer suits all: they are gone!—and scanty remnants scattered here and there, hardly preserve their name. We shall hear no more of the Indian patriot or the Indian statesman. You seek for the scions of that famous confederacy, the Five Nations, the Romans of the West, as they have been termed. In the depth of a narrow-wooded vale, retired from the flourishing settlements of the whites, in the western parts of the State of New York, lingering on the spot where the Great Council-fire of the confederacy burnt for centuries, I have seen the handful of degenerate children who call themselves Onondagas. A few of the Oneidas still occupy a small reservation in the same neighbourhood. The sweet vale of the Mohawk has long ceased to call that tribe master. Queen Anne's chapel, built for their especial use, never sees an Indian within its walls. A scattered remnant of their tribe and of their confederates has settled down in Upper Canada; and as to their powerful antagonist, the Delaware, with its branches, so celebrated for their oratory,—and the Shawanees, the tribe of Tecumseh, what a feeble and scattered remnant are now distinguished by those lofty names!

It is my conviction that the government of the United States, as well as the population of its settled districts, are very sincere in their desire to see justice done to the remnant of these tribes, and, as far as is consistent with the general welfare of the community, to favour and succour them. The main difficulty is, how and by what means these ends are to be attained. The measure now generally adopted, of buying their various lands and reservations, where surrounded by the population of the States, and principally those of the East of the Mississippi, has met with much condemnation from Europeans, especially from those who know the secret of these purchases. The only valid apology which can be made for it, is that of stern and absolute necessity. If the existence of that be proved, the policy may be defended however many things may seem to cast doubt on the expediency or the justice of thus expatriating the wrecks of these tribes from their small heritage of the land of their forefathers; for though the land is virtually bought, and the tribe to a certain degree well remunerated, it is still expatriation. This plea I have, however unwillingly, been led at length to admit. The white man and the Indian cannot be near neighbours. They never will and never can amalgamate. Feuds, murders, disorders will spring up; mutual aggression among the dissolute and ignorant of both classes, will give rise to yet greater evils. If the Indian turns his back upon the alternative of civilization, he must recede; and were it not even advantageous to the white, it would be mercy in the latter to attempt by all lawful means to arrange matters in such a way as to avoid the possibility of collision.

Yet granting that this policy is sound because imperious, no one can look upon the state of the Indian, struggling for existence on the frontier, without commiseration. He is perhaps removed from an impoverished country as far as the game is concerned, to one abounding in it, and of greater extent and richness of soil than that which he relinquishes. The annuity granted by government, the provision made for schools and agricultural instruction, would seem to place him in a more enviable situation, even though he were removed a thousand miles from the graves of his fathers. Yet here he is, if any thing, more exposed to oppression; from that proportion of the white population with whom he is in contact being in general the most abandoned. And it is in this that the Indian system pursued by the government is yet defective. I would ask, are the majority of the agents appointed by government to live among the Indians,—to carry its benevolent designs into execution, just, honest and good men—men of character and probity—above profiting by the defenceless state of the tribes, and superior to the temptations held out on every hand for self-aggrandisement? I think I might answer without fear of contradiction in the negative. The Indians are surrounded by bad men, as the hungry wolves of the desert surround a troop of horses. The government of the United States shows by its conduct to these agents that it does not put confidence in them; and the hard measure which it deals out to them is but a bad apology for much of the iniquity practised by them. The position of both Indian agent and Indian trader is one of overwhelming temptation to a man of lax principle.

As long as matters are so, and the Indian tribes are not put under the inspection of irreproachable men, this difficulty of essentially benefitting them, must be felt by the well-meaning and honest-hearted people of the older States. Men of character are sent out, it is true, from time to time, to see for themselves, and report upon this or the other question; but they seldom know any thing of Indian affairs from personal experience; and those that do, and the only men who can instruct them, are the very Indian agents and traders, few of whom, for very evident reasons, are to be trusted. Such are great impediments in the way of obtaining correct information of the real state of affairs, as those best informed are for the most part inclined to be influenced by private views, and those best intentioned least likely to arrive at the truth. The system condemns itself.

What check is there upon an unprincipled agent, who knows that, for a bottle of whiskey, an Indian will sign or say any thing, and at the same time that his testimony is not valid in a court of justice?

As to the Missionaries on this frontier, my general impression was, that they were worthy men; rather upright than sound in their views for the civilization and moral improvement of the tribes among whom they were sent to labour; and like many of their brethren all over the world, far too weak handed and deficient in worldly wisdom, to cope effectually with the difficulties thrown in their way by the straggling but powerful community of traders, agents, and adventurers of every kind, with whom they must be associated in their intercourse with the Indians. Their work must be a work of faith and humble dependance on God, for by their own strength and wisdom they will achieve nothing. He can effect what men would pronounce impossible. In the lawless licentious conduct of most of the nominal Christians connected with them, the Indian finds sufficient excuse for not quitting the faith of his fathers, as that proffered in exchange seems to produce such evil fruit. But I must bring this long letter to a close.

On the 6th of October we reached the Neosho, or Grand River, a tributary of the Arkansas. We found the great village of the Band of Grey Hairs, deserted and despoiled of all its contents, as we had been given to expect; we paid a short visit to the small settlement of Osage Indians, under the care of Mr. Riquois, the gentleman alluded to above, and then pushed on to the Saline.

This was an estate situated on the romantic bank of the Neosho, about fifty miles above Fort Gibson.

It was the property of the Colonel, whose welcome home amid a crowd of Negroes, Indians of divers tribes and of both sexes, dogs, pigs, cats, turkies, horses, ducks, all looking fat and happy, was an extremely amusing sight.

We were his guests for a day or two, long enough to see that we were on a fine estate, producing but little surplus after feeding the biped and quadruped 'varmint' living upon it; and to witness the coalition formed between the squadron of new dogs and the old retainers, who behaved with great urbanity and kindness to the new comers. We then proceeded by way of Union, to the Western Creek Agency on the river Verdigris, not far distant from the Fort.

LETTER XIII.

I MIGHT have mentioned in my last, that on our arrival at the Saline, the Commissioner and Mr. Irving had pushed forward in advance of us, to Fort Gibson, the former being anxious to reach his future head-quarters, to learn whether his coadjutors had found their way thither from the Eastward. Both the Neosho, upon which the Fort was situated, and the Verdigris at the Agency, upon whose banks Pourtales and myself had halted at the close of my last, discharge themselves into the Arkansas within a few rods of one another, the posts mentioned above, being four or five miles from the points of junction, and in the line about six from each other.

The original idea of my comrade and myself had been to attach ourselves to one of the two great Bands of the Osage tribe, the Grey Hairs or Clermont, and to accompany them on their autumnal hunt. This project was however eventually defeated, and you would hardly be interested by my going into the history of the disappointment, which, in truth, was a grievous one, especially to my companion. Both Bands had already raised camp, and gone off to the Westward, and we were glad to accept the invitation we received on our arrival at the Agency, from our companions at the Fort, to join them in overtaking, and subsequently accompanying an armed expedition to the Westward, which had been despatched a day or two previously in that direction, by the Commander of the Cantonment. An Indian runner had been sent after the body of Rangers composing it, with orders to the officers to halt till the Commissioner and his party should come up with them.

The intimation of this new plan was conveyed to us on the afternoon of our arrival at the Agency, and as the next morning was appointed for departure, the interval was one of great hurry and bustle of preparation.

The excursion we were upon the eve of commencing, differed from that which we had but just concluded in many ways. It was to carry us beyond all human habitations, white or Indian, into a tract of country but imperfectly known even to our guides. It was out of the line of the usual Indian trails, and the luxury of a baggage-waggon was out of the question. The party in advance were all men inured to the semi-savage life of the backwoodsman, and carried their whole stock of conveniences and necessaries on their saddles: and as to ourselves, a few spare saddle-horses, and three or four beasts of burden for the transport of our tent, cooking apparatus, and little hoard of luxuries, were all that it was deemed advisable to be added to the train.

Of all our former company, the indispensable Tonish alone was retained; the others having reached the point of their destination. None of the gallant steeds we had brought from St. Louis and Independence were thought in a condition to undertake this fresh campaign in their state of exhaustion, with the exception of those hitherto used for the waggons, and these were now pressed into the service as sumpter horses, and furnished with pack-saddles.

So here was a grievous duty again: and fresh calls for the display of jockeyship and cuming. The worst was, that all the rogues about us, and they were many, knew that we were in a cleft-stick. They knew, as I have described elsewhere, that horses must be had, and as is usual in such cases, showed their sympathy by fleecing us without conscience. However, bargains were concluded, letters written and dispatched on their long journey to our European friends—provisions bought and packed—the indispensable buckskin leggings, mocassins, and hunting-shirts procured —the thousand and one odd jobs which always imperatively claim a man's attention when he has hardly time to turn himself, disposed of some how or other—arms cleaned—ammunition looked to—balls and buckshot provided in sufficient quantity for a regular battle —horses shod—and saddle bags stuffed to repletion. Besides our ordinary saddle-horses, we contrived to procure two excellent steeds for extraordinary service; and as matters turned out, you will see how much we stood in need of them. In fine, imagine us ready just in time to join our two friends, who arrived from the Fort at the hour appointed, and finally, about noon, Oct. 10th, under the escort of an invalid Lieutenant, and twelve or fourteen invalid Rangers, setting forth with our beasts of burden in quest of the party some fifty or sixty miles in advance. Imagine us sleeping in the court yard of one of the frontier farms on the first night, passing through the Creek nation and by the very last white habitation at noon of the second day, and finally, relinquishing the hope of falling in with the Osages, bending our steps with our companions undauntedly towards the unknown desert region before us.

The setting sun! You may have remarked how steadily for nearly the whole of this year we turned our faces towards that glorious spectacle;—how Spring found us day after day with our hopes and wishes directed there at the hour of eve, while we listened to the songs of the emigrant on the bosom of the sea: how evening after evening, we saw the purple and gold of the Summer sky reflected upon the vast liquid surface of the rivers of the New World; and now, when Autumn was spreading its gorgeous hues over the forest and prairie, we still pressed forward towards the glowing sky, and camped with our faces to the west.

Practice makes perfect, and by degrees the disorder which almost always accompanies a hasty departure, was succeeded by something like order in our train and its details.

Every article, however ill adapted for packing and transportation on the back of a horse, seemed after awhile to get accustomed to the position allotted it by the sharp-witted Tonish and his coadjutors, of whom more anon.

I recollect one exception, however, and that was an odd boot, (a yet more melancholy spectacle than an odd glove,) which was a complete eye-sore as it dangled hour after hour from the crupper of one of the pack-saddles. We were perfectly at a loss to know what had become of its fellow for some time, till on the arrival of the Commissioner's new attaché as guide, hunter, and interpreter, who had lagged in the rear; we heard, that many miles back, he had descried a Creek Indian with a mocassin on one foot, my friend Pourtales' fashionable boot on the other, very patiently hunting about in the long grass for the fellow.

I have named the guide, Beatte, and as he will, perhaps, figure on divers occasions on my paper, you shall here have his character. In consequence of the arrangments made by one or other of the party, he and another half-breed, named Antoine, had been added to the number of personal attendants. In the character of the latter, indolence seemed to be the prevailing feature. It was depicted in his heavy, sleepy, dark eye; and the Indian blood evidently predominated over the French. He was willing and active enough when excited, but it was no common occasion that would incite him to action. For an hour together he would stand at the camp-fire, with his cloak tightly twisted round his body, his arms motionless within, and gaze upon nothing with a fixed glance, in which there was neither life nor speculation. In form, he was an object of admiration to us all, and I suspect to himself no less. His body and limbs were most symmetrically moulded. His bust was that of an Antinous. Indeed, I may here observe, that the finest living models of the human figure I ever saw, were among the Indian half-breeds.

Beatte was the son of a French Creole, by a Quopaw mother. He was of medium height, and of a light compact form and good features. His clothes, poor as they might be in quality, always appeared well draped on his person, and there was something in his whole character and manner, which answered to the picture my fancy paints of Robin Hood. Wayward and distant till he became attached to our persons, we were all inclined to misjudge him at first; but before we had been a week together in the wilderness we found his value. He was by far the best hunter of the whole party engaged in the expedition. The very reverse of Tonish, who used to spread the tidings of his own going forth to the chase throughout the camp, with huge predictions of extraordinary success, which were very rarely fulfilled.—Beatte, seeing that the horses were hobbled, and his services not in immediate demand, took his rifle, stole forth quietly, and seldom came back empty-handed. Further, he was the only one in the whole company who had any knowledge of the country, and his information and guidance might in general be depended on; moreover there was that feeling about him, that he would be true to you in a strait, and stand by you either in a bear-fight or an Indian skirmish; and that was not to be undervalued. That he had met with rough adventures enough in the course of his chequered existence was proved by the state of his limbs and ribs, most of which had been broken or dislocated again and again. In short, when the time of parting came, we all looked upon Beatte as a friend, and Tonish as a scaramouch.

The objects proposed by the expedition were to penetrate into the country lying between the river Arkansas, eighty or one hundred miles above the Neosho, and the Great Canadian to the southward. The idea had been entertained of reserving that part of the country for the ulterior occupation of the tribes on the point of removal from the southern States of the Union, and for this purpose it was necessary to ascertain its real character. The course of the intermediate streams, principally that of the Red Fork, and the tributaries of the Great Canadian were but indifferently known, few besides trappers and hunters having hitherto visited their banks.

An ulterior project of reaching the Great Red River by pursuing a southerly course after gaining the bank of the Canadian was included, but you will find that the expedition failed to accomplish this, from the lateness of the season, and other causes.

On the evening of the third day after quitting the

Agency, as we carefully followed the trail of the party in advance, chiefly through the wooded belt of country, a little north of the Arkansas, we came to the bank of that river,—a mighty stream descending from the highest summits of the Rocky Mountains, through salt and grassy plains, upwards of two thousand miles, to join the 'Father of Waters,' of which it forms the largest tributary, with the exception of the Missouri.

We passed at the same hour an Osage encampment, learning by the way that the Rangers had been seen some miles a-head. Yet we were unable to come up with them before night-fall; and had, in fine, to encamp in an indifferent spot for that night. The following morning, however, we joined them after a ride of an hour, and found them snugly posted in a rich well-timbered level, about two miles from the river. They had halted here already two days awaiting our announced approach, and here the officer in command of our escort gave his charge up to his superior officer, Captain B.

The body of men, to which we were now attached, formed a company of eighty Rangers in the pay of the government, enlisted for the service of the frontier, among the young backwoodsmen of Missouri and Arkansas, for a given time; each providing however, his own horse, rifle, and clothing. Food and ammunition were furnished to them; the nature of the service being of the roughest, uniforms were dispensed with, and each appeared garbed as his fancy or finances dictated. Among them there was an amusing variety of character, and I have a suspicion that, intermingled with some very sober and worthy members of society, allured to enlist by a desire to see the world and to lead a holiday kind of life away from their farms for a twelve-month, there was a very large sprinkling of prodigal sons and neer-do-weels.

As aids to the Captain, who was an experienced backwoodsman, two or three Lieutenants, of like qualifications and credit were added; and a medical man,—the very reverse of our scientific querulous companion in the former part of our tour,—being a man of a thousand; of sound mind and body; and moreover an excellent marksman and fully accustomed to the life of hap-hazard and adventure we were prosecuting. The men carried rations for a certain number of days, after which it was expected that we should come within the Buffalo-range, and amply provide ourselves there with the necessary food.

The Camp, on our arrival, formed a strange wild scene. The hunters had been successful, and nine deer were added to the stock of provisions. The bee-hunters also had been on the alert, and eighteen bee-trees were discovered, cut down, and rifled of their hoard of sweets: besides turkeys, and smaller game were plentiful in the vicinity of the Camp,—so that abundance reigned there.

Groups were seen on every hand among the trampled thicket, and in the midst of the labyrinth of pea-vine, brush, green-briar, and other creepers, engaged in some chosen occupation;—drying venison, preparing the skins, mending their accoutrements, firing at a mark, or casting balls; and, when night set in, the scene presented by the huge blazing watch-fires in the deep forest, was not the less striking and beautiful.

The reveille was sounded at early dawn, and by sunrise our long line put itself in motion, proceeding, at a slow, even pace, through brake and bush, and over rocky hill and prairie.

According to the usage of the country, we travelled in Indian file, one following the other, and never abreast, thus indicating our line of march by a narrow, deeply indented trail across the country. Our course was much to the north of west, and lay over a line of wooded hills, rough on the sides and summits with fragments of sandstone, and of considerable elevation above the deep bed of the river to our left. We left the Bald Hill, a notable saddle-shaped eminence, rising from an elevated plateau, about half a mile to the right; and about three o'clock in the afternoon, struck the Arkansas again. Its hue was here of a deep red, and the stream apparently about half a mile in breadth, flowed with a rapid whirling current among shoals and sand-bars. On its long sweep of sandy beech, we noticed the track of innumerable elk, bears, turkeys, and racoons; and were glad to perceive that the flood of the preceding week was gradually subsiding. Our camp was pitched in a rich hollow in the forest, at a convenient distance from the river. Here we killed our first elk, besides other game.

It would not answer any purpose for me to sketch each succeeding day's proceedings, though I delight to retrace every step in fancy. However, the next day was too important in the history of our enterprise, not to claim a short notice. I have already alluded to the general purposes of the expedition. The more detailed orders received at the garrison, directed the Captain to cross the Arkansas at or near its point of junction with the Red Fork, flowing from the Southward, and then to ascend the valley of the latter river for a given distance.

As nothing was known of the Ford, the attempt at crossing had been looked forward to with no small interest.

By calculating the distance already traversed, since we left the Agency, up to the commencement of this day's march, it was surmised we must now be within a few leagues of the point of junction; but for a few hours we were obliged in proceeding, to keep wide of the river, over a range of wooded sandstone hills, in order to overcome the obstacle to a more direct course, which presented itself, in a very high rocky promontory. From the heights above it, however, we caught a view of the whole country for many miles round, including a glimpse of the river of which we were in search.

The Red Fork appeared worthy of its name, pouring down into the main river at our feet, a turbid bright red stream, broken by wide level sand bars and mud banks. We soon struck into an old Indian trail, and descending into the entangled jungle to the North of the promontory, gained the densely wooded bank of the Arkansas again. Here several halts were made for consultation, and after several trials as to the practicability of effecting our passage, it was found that the river in the immediate vicinity of its tributary, was extremely turbid and deep, and it was therefore considered advisable to ascend higher in search of a ford.

While we were breaking our way through the entangled brushwood, it happened that our approach roused a poor skunk from his noontide slumber under a fallen tree. His destruction was speedily effected by Tonish and Beatte, not however before it had avenged itself by filling the air with such a subtil and fetid odour as was almost beyond human endurance. Considerable wrath was excited among the more delicately-nosed portion of the party by this procedure, though the feeling was mingled with surprise on observing, that after having been divested of its skin, the animal was appended to the saddle of Beatte as a welcome addition to his next supper. He was in a wayward humour, and while Tonish,—who usually arrogated to himself the credit of every valuable capture, was exciting the appetite of my curious comrade with a descant upon its peculiar delicacy,—he pushed forward to his place at the head of the line, without offering either explanation or apology. Some how or other, the skunk never made its appearance at table, and upon inquiry it was ascertained, that in the midst of the bustle consequent upon the passage of the river, it had disappeared in a most unaccountable manner, and though hunted for by Beatte with the same eagerness as a cat will hunt for a mouse which may have escaped, after having been long in her possession—was not to be found. We had a shrewd suspicion that our friend Irving, whose spite against the dead animal had been concentrated and uncompromising, knew more about the disappearance than he chose to publish. We never fairly brought him to his confession, but from a sly twinkle of the eye, and restlessness about the muscles of the lips, whenever the subject was mentioned, I have no doubt but he was the delinquent, and that some day the truth will out. I may still mention that as we all got considerably less refined, and more savage in our tastes, in a week or ten days time this Indian delicacy was several times served up at our mess without raising any great disturbance.

After a further advance of two or three miles with no inconsiderable toil, appearances being more favourable, another halt was proclaimed. The river was here about a quarter of a mile wide. Beatte made the essay, and it was seen that the passage might be effected with a swim of perhaps a dozen yards in the middle. As it was doubtful whether we should better ourselves by further advance, the Captain finally resolved to attempt the passage at this spot. The men were ordered to prepare rafts for their arms and baggage, and to swim their horses as they might. All the axes were put in immediate requisition. While the forest was echoing to the first strokes of the axe ever heard in this solitude, and all hands were busied with hurried preparations, for what threatened to be, in the opinion of the Rangers, a doubtful and laborious piece of service; Beatte, Tonish, and Antoine were occupied with their own peculiar schemes and projects for the speedy passage of our effects. I might still smile at recollecting my own surprise, and that of divers of the Rangers in my vicinity, when, ten minutes after the resolution to cross was announced, I scrambled through the brush to the brink of the river, with my saddle and other accoutrements which I had been preparing for transportation, and descried a pile of our effects already on the level sands of the opposite shore, while our three half savages were to be seen swimming, whooping, and yelling in mid-current round a buffalo skin which they had quickly transformed into a canoe, by simply tying up the ends, and putting light sticks athwart the opening, to make it keep its shape. Into this clever make-shift, they continued to tumble every thing in turn; saddles, pack-saddles, provision, clothing, tent, and guns, and in fine, in six or seven crossings, brought all dry to the opposite shore, crowning their labours during the two last trips, by seating the Commissioner and Mr. Irving in turn on the top of the load, and landing them safe and sound on the right bank.

Meanwhile, with the exception of the Captain and the Doctor, who were close at hand, working doggedly upon their raft, we were left alone, for the news having been brought of the discovery of a yet better ford, half a mile higher up, all the Rangers had repaired thither: thus Pourtales and myself, after seeing that we could be of no assistance, and having confided every superfluous article about us to the care of the canoe party, jumped on the bare backs of our horses and followed their trail, eventually crossing, half wading and half swimming, as others had done before us.

The whole scene was highly picturesque as you looked upon the river, gliding at the base of a range of high rocky hills, with the thick forests arrayed in the glorious hues of autumn, and saw the bright flame-coloured sands sprinkled by groups of horsemen and piles of baggage.

The day was altogether one of considerable excitement, and when, towards the close, we found ourselves snugly encamped among the trees in a most romantic dell, surrounded by precipitous rocks, which from the abundant signs afforded of our having dislodged a number of those animals, we called the Bear's Glen, we felt both happy and thankful that this first difficulty had been fortunately overcome without serious detention or accident.

I remember strolling with my gun, over the head of the hill to the left, as the sun went down, throwing his golden light over the valley of the Arkansas, and thinking our position one of uncommon beauty and romance. We seemed to be once more in a hilly region. To the north-west a deep dun smoke on the horizon, betokened the burning prairies and the presence of the Indian in that quarter, while directly below me in the twilight of the deep-shaded glen, the camp-fires were gleaming red beneath their wreaths of smoke, and the voices of the rangers, and the bells of the horses rose to the ear.

On calling the muster-roll after dark, all the human beings belonging to the party were present; but Mr. Irving's horse, one or two of our pack-horses, and a few others belonging to the Rangers were missing; and as several of them were reported to have been descried in the dusk, floundering in the mud of a deep creek on the other side of the river, we were not without our fears for their safety. Whatever the morrow might betide, we knew that this day's labours were at an end, and soon terminated it by lying down on our bear-skins before the fire.

Beatte was up at early dawn, and over the river with Antoine. The former returned soon after sun-rise with all the horses that were missing belonging to our mess. The latter, who had gone off in search of them in another direction, did not overtake us till the following morning. On returning to the Bear's Glen, with some of the Rangers, from his fruitless quest after the horses, a few hours after we had evacuated it, it was found that the rightful possessors had begun to resume their old quarters, grumbling no doubt most heartily at the inconvenience they had been put to, to make way for such saucy and thankless intruders. Poor fellows! they were badly remunerated for the use of their lodgings, for two were straightway killed, and the laggards came up loaded with their venison.

They found us encamped in a little secluded peninsula, formed by a creek in the vicinity of the Red Fork. The stream, as it strayed from one deep clear pool, over broken rock and tangled grass, to another within high banks, formed a kind of natural entrenchment for us.

From this point, a few of the party, who were invalids, were here allowed to retrace their steps to the Fort, from which we might now be about one hundred miles distant. From the banks of the Arkansas we had traversed a number of elevated ridges, partly open prairie and partly covered with forest, from the crests of which we often surveyed a most extensive horizon.

Four deer and an elk having been killed the evening of our arrival, and large troops of the latter seen, it was proposed to rest a day here and hunt. So, what between our proportion of the bear's meat, and other venison ; and abundance of turkeys and fresh provision brought in the following day,—messes No. 1 and No. 2 were plenteously supplied during the day of rest, (Oct. 17th) and the whole camp appeared like a kitchen. Man has been defined as a 'cooking animal,' and in that particular, clearly distinct from any other on the face of the globe. There could be no doubt of our belonging to the race; for continual trussing and spitting, drying and smoking, carving and cooking, was the order of the day of repose. We found that we all belonged to the hunter tribe, and that there was to be no medium between a feast and a fast.

My next shall give you some further sketch of the organization of our party, and details connected therewith.

LETTER XIV.

You will have supposed, without my having perhaps expressly mentioned it, that, when in camp, our trio, with the Commissioner and our several attendants, formed a separate mess, having but little connection with the others, but such as friendly courtesy and our association as fellow-adventurers dictated.

From the moment the signal for encampment was given, to the bugle-call that gave token of our morning departure, we were in fact as much *chez nous*, as though we had inhabited separate houses. We were dependant upon our own arrangements for comfort, and upon our success, or rather I should say upon that of our retainers, for our supplies of provisions, beyond those few necessaries, or luxuries, if you will, that we contrived to carry with us. The Captain and his officers, formed also a mess a part, and ordinarily pitched their camp-fire a dozen yards or so from our own. The men were divided according to friendship or fancy, into ten or a dozen parties, each having its own rations, and an equal share of the venison which the hunters appointed in rotation, brought into camp.

You will also, perhaps, have understood, with regard to the Rangers, that, though in the pay of Government, neither the officers, nor the men, were considered to belong to any class of regular troops; and that neither one nor the other had any great idea of military discipline.

To keep the file, when on march; never to leave the camp without express permission, and to obey the general orders, was all that the Captain required: and considering this to have been the case, I am astonished at the almost unbroken good conduct of such a number of young men, brought together with no very definite idea of what it was to submit their will to that of a superior, or of the necessity which teaches men the value of discipline. As it was, we heard and saw nothing bordering on either insubordination or coercion. They were for the most part sons of substantial farmers and settlers, and some certainly accustomed from their earliest years to study the craft of a backwoodsman. Such was Ryan, a fine old man, who, out of love to the hunter's life, had joined the expedition and the messes of those far younger and less experienced than himself. He was a fine specimen of that race for which the frontier has been celebrated ever since Daniel Boone led the way across the mountains. He had begun to hunt and kill the deer, when yet so young, that his father's rifle had to be supported upon his little shoulder by both hands; when the paternal hunting-pocket hung far under his loins, and when he had to get upon a tree stump to ram the ball home.

A dozen of the men, perhaps, turned out really good hunters; and, in the skilful use of the rifle, might do justice to the fame which has been earned by the backwoodsman.

The whole science of rifle-shooting, and the rifle in use in America, are so different from those of Europe, and of Switzerland and the Tyrol in particular, that you can hardly draw a comparison between the merits of the rival parties. The rifle of central Europe is a much heavier weapon, and carries a much heavier ball. —not unfrequently twenty to the pound. The grooving is deeper, and a greater degree of force necessary for the introduction of the ball. Skill in its use consists rather in hitting a man or an animal at three hundred paces, than in cutting the jugular vein with certainty at fifty feet. The American weapon is, perhaps, as long or longer, carrying generally a small ball of eighty, or of even one hundred to the pound. It admits of the ball being sent home from the very muzzel by a mere rod; and is further peculiar in there being no kind of attention paid to balancing the length and weight of the barrel by the size and make of the stock. Practice alone will teach you to hold it with ease to yourself. There is a great deal more coquetry displayed in the use of the American rifle; and the nicety with which an object may be struck at fifty or a hundred feet by a knowing hand, is undoubtedly extraordinary.

The Captain, the Doctor, and Ryan, were, perhaps, the best shots of the party. But still, a word of the

Rangers. I have told you that the military duties were not severe. With the exception of the sentinels, of whom three or four were commonly posted round the Camp, more for the sake of keeping up an air of discipline at this period of the expedition, than from any real necessity for such a precaution,—from the moment their horses were hobbled, and sent hopping into the adjoining forest, to the hour preceding departure, when they had to be sought for and brought into camp,—the men had their time to themselves. A large portion was spent in eating and sleeping, and the excitement incident to our position made some portion fly fast, yet sufficient remained upon their hands to render its occupation no easy matter. Books they had none; they were neither botanists, nor humourists, nor admirers of the picturesque; so when neither their horses, nor persons, nor accoutrements demanded further attention, they had little to do, you will think, but to lie on their backs, and look up at the sky, or at the burning logs. Far from it. We found before we had been a week in the camp, that the most decided appetite of barter, or as it was termed 'swopping,' had descended, or I should perhaps say, arisen among them; and this increased to a perfect contagion. It was a never-failing source of amusement to the lookers-on, in messes No. 1, and No. 2, to see the daily metamorphoses that took place. Nothing but the actual person seemed to be exempt from the influence ot swopping. Horses, saddles, rifles, clothes of every kind changed masters, and you could never be certain of an individual till you saw his face. There was a notable green blanket-coat which was borne forth from the garrison on the back of a man named Guess, whom I had hired as orderly, to take charge of my spare horse, and which, before we reached the Fort on our return, had clothed the shoulders of half the Rangers in succession. Though in general we were considered beyond the influence of this epidemic, on one occasion I had it offered to me by a Ranger, who took a fancy to my buckskin hunting-shirt, and wished to beguile me into a swopp. Many tales reached our ears of the superior cunning and calculation of divers among them; but of these I will only mention the case of one man who was continually swopping his horse, and on our return to Fort Gibson, possessed the very animal he had started with, and sixty dollars into the bargain. I need not indicate from what part of the Union such a sly fox must have come. One or two of the older and steadier rangers kept aloof out of the vortex, and among these Ryan, and a comical old fellow, the butt of the troop, of the name of Sawyer. He was one of those strange mixtures of simplicity and shrewdness that you sometimes meet with. Dame nature seems every now and then to turn out a few individuals made up of scraps and leavings; some as far as their physique is concerned, others as to the intellect: and in the same manner as you may have noted a man here and there whose head, feet, and hands were evidently intended for a personage of large dimensions, while the trunk might be puny, disproportioned, and insignificant—in the same manner the most inconsistent and incongruous ingredients seem to have been thrown together to fashion the mind of certain individuals. Sawyer generally asked for a furlough three times a day when in camp, and was celebrated for losing himself, and spending the night nobody knew where. He was used as a 'cat's-paw' by the men, whenever they wished to pry into the plans and designs of the officers.

As to ourselves, we had amusement and excitement enough without swopping. We had agreed from the outset, that, as the three domestics had their hands full with the care of the general disposition of our affairs while in camp, and the charge of loading and unloading pack-horses; that each of us should continue to look to his own steed—unsaddling and hobbling him in the first instance, and, when brought into camp the following morning, taking off the vile hobbles and preparing him for the start. There was no hardship in this, if I except unhobbling, as the knot with which the feet were strongly secured, during the course of a long night spent in hopping through the damp grass, became often hard as iron, and as wet as a sponge; and many a time have I begun to lose my equanimity, and been on the point of using my knife, after five minutes were thrown away with alternate application of teeth and fingers, vainly attempting to unloose the gordian tie. For the rest, all seemed to inspire pleasure; and when we subsequently met in the gay saloons of the Eastern cities, we often recalled those days of adventure and light-heartedness.

We had left the busy world to the eastward seething like a cauldron with excitement. To the ordinary bustle and stir of a people straining with soul and body for the acquisition of wealth—that attendant upon the pending election of a President, and the presence of that fearful scourge, the cholera, which had just then reached the line of the Western waters, was added. Here, alone in the midst of the great wilderness, we moved day by day; lay down at night, and rose in the morning in peace and quiet. We were like a vessel moored in a sheltered haven, within the breakers, and out of the reach of the tempest raging in the open sea. Those who have never moved out of the narrow sphere in which all is artificial; where the possession of much makes the attainment of more an absolute necessity; where luxuries appear to be necessaries;—can hardly conceive, how little is in reality essential, not only for existence, but for contentment; or what a pliant and easily moulded mind and body we possess. Get only over your prejudice and try, and there are thousands of so-called comforts that you can do without—and of things which you can do for yourself.

I look back with peculiar delight to our mode of life, and our intercourse with a few trusty friends, on these and our succeeding autumnal wanderings. Both were spent far away beyond the noise and bustle of the great highways of existence. Surely, without having experienced it, you can find excuse for my enthusiasm.

Our connection with the world being cut off, we enjoyed a perfect absence of annoyance from without. The year was too far advanced for insect plagues, at the same time that the season was so mild and genial, that with few exceptions, our tent was thrown aside as useless.

To quit one trampled and despoiled camp just when the morning light began to reveal its loss of beauty, and turning our faces towards the West with the assurance that, please God, though none could say where, we should find another place of repose in the day's decline in all its pristine beauty:—to hold our march hour after hour over the untrodden waste, or through the forest—now breaking our way through a thick grove, then breathing the free air of the open prairie, or the scented brake of mint and sumac—beguiling the hours in conversations, and losing sight of the monotony of the scenery presented for weeks to our view, in the excitement afforded by the constant look-out for game, or speculation upon the trails of the Indians now and then fallen in with—who they were—of what tribe—hostile or friendly—when they passed:—to watch the fleet course of the startled deer over the undulating prairie—or to listen to the wailing cry of the cranes above our head, descried like so many white specks floating in the blue ether: finally to choose our new abode in the tall deep forest by the river side, or among those exquisite groups on the higher grounds, where the forest merges into the prairie, and forms landscapes teeming with all the charming varieties of English park-scenery—was not all this delightful? And, when the little share of toil and care which fell to the lot of each alike was concluded; and the hours intervening before sun-set, which each passed as he listed, were ended,—when each came dropping in from his walk or the chase, and the fire grew momentarily brighter and brighter, as, enjoying our hunters' repast, the twilight gloom settled down among the trees,—when the evening tale and sober mirth were prolonged, till each in turn stole to his chosen nook in the tall grass, or on the thick leaves which the autumnal forest shed—were not our pleasures equally simple and guileless?

The blessing of sound sleep seemed to be denied to none who needed it:—and yet I delighted to wake in the stillness of the long night, and to rouse my spirit from its lethargy; to open my eyes upon the deep blue sky, with its host of stars, over-head; to glance upon the dying fires and sleeping camp; to muse upon the past and the present; to raise my heart to heaven; —and, without taking care for the future, to bless God for a portion of those sweet and healthful thoughts which spring from a calm and contented spirit, and incite my soul to gratitude for this lull and calm in the midst of the heaving and restless sea of existence.

Previous to October 22nd, when we crossed the Red Fork, having proceeded about eighty miles up the country on the left bank in a south-west direction,—our advance was rather broken, and the numbers of our company became diminished by divers among the Rangers having been obliged to return eastward, either through ill health or as bearers of despatches. Five or six of the horses belonging to the men had also taken it into their heads to hobble away from us, so that our line was often a very straggling one, and the laggards were more than once a whole day's journey in the rear.

The character of the country thus far had been more hilly than usual in these Western regions. Along the immediate banks of the river, rich alluvial bottoms were ordinarily met with; but the greater part of the upper and open country was barren in the extreme; nothing but a scanty soil covering the bright red sandstone which frequently protruded to the surface, and appeared strewed with pebbles of rich nodulous iron-ore.

For the first ten or twelve days of our march the horses had found a sufficiency of pasturage in the rich brakes of the lower ground, the pea-vine being still plentiful, and the grass green and sweet. Deer were also numerous, and smaller game; and moreover the men had been furnished with rations for a fortnight. At or before the expiration of that term, they confidently calculated upon reaching the Buffalo-range, and there procuring the necessary provisions for the prosecution of the enterprise and subsequent return; so that upon our coming in contact with the herds of that animal, not only much of our anticipated gratification depended, but even the success of the expedition.

As we advanced, therefore, deeper into the country from the Arkansas, we looked out anxiously for some indications of our vicinity to the Buffalo; and to this object of constant speculation and attention, yet another was added, and that was 'Pawnee-sign.' The region into which we were now advancing might not unaptly be termed the Debateable Land of this part of the continent: an arena upon which parties of the hostile tribes of the east and the west continually scouted in pursuit of the buffalo and elk, which they accounted common property, and to earn their claim to the war-eagle's feather, the skunk skin, and the necklace of gristly-bears' claws of the warrior, by the bringing away the scalps of those whom they meet and can surprise. Few years pass but blood is shed upon these deserts, and many a spot is marked by the scenes of Indian surprise and unprovoked murder, or by the still more fearful harvest of revenge and retaliation. From the Osage, Creeks, and Cherokees, of course we had nothing to fear, however they might here now and then shed each others' blood. Their interests are too nearly involved with that of the Paleface, for them to meditate further wrong than perhaps the theft of a stray horse. But with the Pawnee, who would appear to be the Arab of the West, whose hand is against every one, from their far settlements on the tributaries of the Missouri to the Great Red River,—and with the bands of the Commanches who make incursions into the same plains from the Mexican border, the case was different. These tribes differ from those nearer the Mississippi in many respects, and though from their less frequent intercourse with

Europeans, they are seldom found to be furnished with fire-arms, and are in so far less formidable, yet the excellence of their horses, the celerity of their movements, and their personal address and numbers, give them advantages which the others have not. In their roving existence north and south, as they follow the trail of the immense herds of Buffalo in their annual migration, they are often found six or seven hundred miles from their villages, and in seeking the one you always run a chance of falling in with the other. It may occur to you, that even if we fell in with a horde of a few hundreds of them, a body of sixty armed men, under proper discipline, would have little to fear from their hostility: yet setting aside the danger of surprise, there were contingent circumstances, which, if not positively as disagreeable and dangerous as losing a fight and coming immediately into their power, might eventually prove nearly as bad. Such would be the loss of any number of our horses, the murder of the stragglers and hunters, when our very numbers would be against us rather than for us, especially at this advanced season. So you may well imagine that our scouts did right to use their eyes, and that singular intelligence which is taught by a life of constant exposure to want and danger; and that the higher we advanced up the country the more interest was attached to Indian trails, marks of Indian encampments, and any moving speck upon the vast rolling prairie around us.

As to the Buffalo, our eagerness to fall in with him increased day by day. Its habits are well known, and I need hardly tell you that the vulgar name is a misnomer, as this animal differs in many essential points from either the Italian or the African species of Urus, bearing it. The hump on the shoulders, the mane and beard, and the form of the horns, which are short and sharp, all distinguish the Bison of America from the other species, not to speak of anatomical distinctions. They were now known to be moving from the north, whither their vast herds had followed the genial growth of the fresh grass, as it sprung up under one degree of latitude after another, and to be repairing to the southern rivers and plains to seek their winter food.

Like the Indian, they too have had to forsake their original domains and retire into the waste. Anciently, they were known to have roamed over the western parts of the State of New York. At the time that the first adventurers crossed the Alleghany, sixty years ago, the rich forests and cane-brakes of Kentucky and Tennessee swarmed with them. Now there is not one to be found east of the Mississippi: and as man has penetrated, year by year, hundreds of miles to the westward, so the Bison has fled his presence, and yearly interposes a good hundred miles between its path-way and the nearest settlements, in contradistinction to the 'white man's fly,' as the Indian terms the bee, which is said always to move in advance of the encroaching Pale-face. A very few years back, and the Bison might be met with and killed in the centre of the Arkansas Territory, but we had now advanced a hundred miles beyond its remotest limit, and had not yet met with them. Their jealousy of the approach of man is no safeguard to them; and their vast strength and fierceness when attacked are of no avail against the perseverance and means of annoyance of their numerous enemies. The Indians, the trapper, and the white hunter, kill thousands yearly. The wolves hunt the straggling cows and calves in packs. Nearer the mountains the Gristly-Bear fattens upon their flesh; but as yet their numbers appear undiminished, and undiminishable. Ten thousand in a single drove have frequently been seen further west towards the head-waters of the Arkansas; and their trample and roaring when pursued, is said to shake the earth long before they are seen, and to fill the air with a sound like distant thunder.

How it is, that an enterprising people like the Americans, have not long ago domesticated this animal, and crossed the breed of European cattle, is to me a mystery. However frequently asserted, we never heard of a well-accredited instance of its being attempted successfully.

But to resume the history of our adventures and achievements.

Two days before we crossed the Red Fork, the recent signs of the Bison, which had hitherto been very dubious, became more and more evident, frequent, and certain; and at length the joyful report of a few bulls and wild horses having been actually seen, was brought into camp by some of the stragglers. Dung, bones, and innumerable hoof-marks were first descried;

then hollow places in the plains, where the animals had wallowed: then, tracts of many acres where thousands had trampled and crowded for years in their passage, allured by a spring or a salt-lick, appeared depressed far below the general level of the country. At the same time, Beatte proclaimed 'Pawnee-sign,' and for the first time, by way of precaution, the horses were tied up at night, and the sentinel began to find that he must not doze on his post, as he had hitherto done as a matter of course.

The following day, after traversing apparently interminable prairies, furrowed by the deep straight trails of the Bison, which with the tokens of mounted Indians having been on their traces, kept us on the '*qui vive*' all day; we collected our scattered party towards evening in a deep wooded copse, and prepared to ford the adjoining river early the following morning; passing the remaining hours of day-light in some kind of general preparation;—cleaning our arms, melting balls, and listening with more than even usual indulgence, to the egotistical rhapsodies of Tonish, which always ended with a huge indefinite promise for the future, couched in the words: '*Ah-qu-qu-qué vous verrez!*'

It was amusing to see the effect of the life we were leading, and the company we were associated with, on the spirits of the most peaceable amongst us. There was the good, kind-hearted Commissioner, whose career had never been stained up to the present time by act of violence to beast or bird, girding himself in his own quiet way for the expected rencontre with biped or quadruped savages, and breathing destruction to the innocent skunks and turkeys. There too was to be seen our friend Irving,—the kindly impulse of whose nature is to love every living thing,—ramming a couple of bullets home into a brace of old brass-barrelled pistols which had been furnished him from the armory at Fort Gibson, with a flourish of the ramrod, a compression of the lip, and a twinkle of the eye, which decidedly betokened mischief. As to my comrade, incited by the marvellous tales of Tonish; it was dangerous to hunt in a jungle with him, such was his anxiety to have a shot at the Bison.

You may recollect I mentioned in a former letter, a certain double-barrelled fowling-piece which the Commissioner had brought away from a government agent on the Missouri. It had kept us company ever since, going among us usually by the name of 'Uncle Sam,' such being the *sobriquet* given by the Americans to the General Government, from the usual initials U. S. or United States, affixed upon Government property.

It was a piece of respectably ancient mould and fabric, about four inches across the breech, and two at the muzzle; and, when its old-fashioned locks were at full-cock, looked sufficiently formidable, from the manner in which they appeared strained to the uttermost, lying down upon their backs previous to taking the spring. Hitherto, however, it had been the most innocent piece in the whole troop. At the time we got possession of it, it had been found to be in a most ridiculous state of repletion, being full of successive charges of powder and ball, and, *vice versa*, nearly to the muzzle. Being the property of the Commonwealth, nobody in particular had thought it his business to look after it. Three weeks prior to the time I commemorate, it had been put into my hands in order to decide what was the matter with it; as in spite of every appearance of being heavily loaded, it obstinately refused to go off. I had found three buckshot under the powder in one barrel, and a roll of dog-wood shavings and tow in the chamber of the other. How they came there no one could tell; but it appeared, that whoever had an idle moment and nothing to occupy his fingers upon, amused himself by ramming something or other down into 'Uncle Sam.' Well, this evening a bright thought struck the Commissioner; the piece was straightway poked out from among the baggage, where we had been accustomed to see it, projecting like a stern-chaser over the crupper of old Gombo, one of the baggage horses; and serious intentions were evidently entertained of using it against the Buffalo or the Pawnees. But to war against any living thing seemed to be quite contrary to its principles. It was found to be again heavily loaded, but again refused to go off. It was of course without a ramrod. One of dog-wood, and that a crooked one, was manufactured for it by the patient hands of the Commissioner; which with great trouble was inserted. It was yet with greater difficulty withdrawn, and a good hour was passed in attempting to make it disgorge a mass of unknown contents. At length having been put into some kind of trim, it was included in the sum of effective weapons in the field, and you shall not fail to hear of 'Uncle Sam's' further adventures.

Just before we descended to covert from the higher grounds, we had seen a wild horse dashing across our line of march. It was the first we had met with, but, however its appearance seemed to excite general attention at the time, after getting to camp, no more was thought of it. The breed of horses which are scattered in great numbers over these plains, is a cross between those introduced by the Spaniards and French, but are, with single exceptions, rather a degenerate race in both appearance and power.

According to his custom, Beatte, after seeing that his services could be dispensed with, disappeared, and shortly after dark returned, to the great surprise of all, with a wild horse in his lasso. He had dashed off on the trail of that we had seen; had crossed the Red Fork, and met with both horses and a troop of Bison. He had run down one of the former in the dusk, noosed him, detained him while his comrades fled deeper into the wilderness, and succeeded in bringing him home in triumph, much to the astonishment of the Rangers, by whom such a feat was hardly considered possible. The captive was a pretty cream-coloured animal, with flowing mane and tail, and a large full eye, beaming with terror and surprise, as well it might, at its unexpected loss of liberty, and introduction among the camp-fires to the scene of so much noise and bustle.

The next morning, when the bugle gave order to resume our Indian file, the 'desert-born' appeared in the midst of us, to begin his life of servitude. The lasso was still round his neck. His eye, naturally full of gentleness, dilated with terror whenever the fond hands of the bystanders approached him; and this feeling seemed to be increased to agony, when the captor succeeded in securing a light burden on his back. But even to this sad alternative to perfect freedom, he yielded at last with a tolerably good grace, after a few last groans, and a roll on the ground. I believe that there was more than one amongst us who felt his sympathies strongly moved for the gentle creature, and heartily inclined to regret the capture.

Our passage of the Fork was made without delay or accident, in spite of the deep red mud which formed the bed of the river. We crossed on the trails of a large herd of Bison, which seemed to have chosen the same ford, and now stood on Pawnee ground. The colour of this river I have already alluded to. The briny taste of its waters, as they poured down from a region abounding not only in salt springs, but in masses of pure rock-salt, rendered it thoroughly unpotable.

Our direction was now to the southward, leaving the course of the river tending much more to the West than it had hitherto done. My next shall give you a condensed sketch of our proceedings to the close of the ensuing week, when we halted in the vicinity of the Great Canadian.

LETTER XV.

THE dark brown horizon which appeared before us as we emerged from the deep bed of the river, was known to be the Cross Timbers, a broad belt of dwarf oak forest, rarely interrupted by prairie, extending across the country, from the Red Fork to the Great Canadian, in the direction of North and South. Its mean breadth, by the report of the Indians, was twelve or fourteen miles, and it was now our object to cross it in a south-westerly direction. None of our party I think will ever forget that hilly stony region, with its almost impenetrable forest of the closest and harshest growth, whose low rugged branches, black and hard as iron with the alternate extremes of frost and fire, cost us many a fierce scramble and struggle on our passage both to and from the Canadian.

During the greater part of the first day, while skirting the Cross Timbers, we appeared to be in the line of march of thousands of Bison. The banks of the Red Fork were in many places perfectly broken down by their numbers, and the whole country was furrowed by their tracks, as in long lines, one after the other in Indian file, they had proceeded southward. From this time we continued to fall in with divers parties of the stragglers, all males. On the evening of this day, one circumstance broke in upon the monotony of our proceedings. We had pitched our camp. In doing this latterly, more attention had been paid to the choice of a defensible position. As was my custom, after seeing my horse provided for, I was scouting over the country at some distance from the camp, about an hour before sun-down, when I met the Captain returning in great haste. He said he had reason to believe that there were Indians in our neighbourhood, and urged my immediate return. The alarm soon spread, and the scene of confusion which ensued was amusing enough, as in hasty preparation for a fight, the horse-bells were instantly muffled, fires extinguished, arms prepared, and the horses brought in and resaddled. An anxious uncertainty prevailed for a few hours, till most of the stragglers came in; and it was believed, after comparing notes, that the Captain and some of his own party had been dodging one another in the misty haze, and thus the mistake had arisen. However, a night alarm ensued by a sentinel shooting, as he said, at a wolf, and I believe the panic was of some use, as it made all parties more watchful and alert.

We were now employed for several days in struggling through the Cross Timbers. At the same time matters began to change with us rather for the worse. The encampment became poorer and poorer, affording neither pasture for the horses, nor even water, in any great quantity, and the little we found was generally bad. We began to long after one of the thousands of 'sweet and curious brooks' which gush forth on the Atlantic side of the Alleghany. We found no more deer. The Bison hitherto seen, had been males only; and even when shot, were killed far from the Camp, so that but little of the meat could be transported thither. The supplies of fresh provision were therefore a little irregular and uncertain. Of course, the rations brought from the garrison had long ago disappeared. The bears truly were plentiful and fat, from feeding upon the rich harvest of acorns which covered the ground; but though as many as nine were seen in the vicinity of one camp, they were a cowardly set, and never waited to be killed; but slunk away among the entangled brushwood, till out of sight, and then shambled off with their ungainly gallop so that we had no chance of another feast of bear's venison. But the most serious matter after all, was the fact, that many of the horses began to fail. Mr. Irving's strong and handsome bay had sprained his shoulder before we crossed the Red Fork, and had been, of necessity, abandoned. One of my two steeds had been useless from indisposition for many days. Two or three of the Ranger's horses were irrecoverably lost, and among them, one, whose master having taken a fancy to hunt wild horses, had the vexation to find himself thrown and abandoned by his steed, while the latter galloped off to the desert with the troop. In short, some of the party were already on foot, and others were speedily threatened with a like fate.

In the Cross Timbers themselves, no animal but the bear could find sustenance. They were as, I have before said, composed almost entirely of oak, of which I enumerated seven distinct species, besides varieties; from the diminutive pin-oak, bearing acorns at two years growth, to the large-cupped burr-oak. Properly speaking there was no undergrowth but a coarse grass. From this iron-bound region, we generally contrived to escape towards night-fall, and to seek for a resting place in one of those spots of verdure in the vallies, where the fading green and yellow foliage of the cotton-wood poplar formed a pleasing contrast to the leafless oak, and held out promise of our obtaining the indispensable necessaries of wood and water.

In these little Oases, we commonly found some remnant of the riches of autumn, and burying ourselves and our horses in the thicket, made our position as comfortable as we could.

Besides the above-mentioned poplar, together with hickory, walnut and willows, and the black and honey-locust, we found a rich under-growth of dogwood, persimmon, haws, vines with sweet and sour grapes—Chickasaw plums of various colours—sassafras, and abundance of green-briar or tear-blanket as it is familiarly called—besides sumac, the delight of the bear at this season.

Such a Camp we occupied on the evening of the 24th, and a beautiful one it was: we killed in its neighbourhood four Buffalo bulls and twenty turkeys, a piece of good fortune which we knew how to profit by, and, lighting our fires among the skeleton bowers remaining from a large Osage Camp of the preceding year, we here spent a contented night with the feeling, that our horses would get at least one night's good pasturage.

You will easily conceive after the description I have given you of the Cross Timbers, that we always hailed the prospect of entering upon a tract of open prairie with delight.

It was something to breathe the pure air, and have before one the expanded views of the prairie, upon whose surface every object was matter of curiosity and speculation. Their hue, it is true, at this late season, when the grass is dead, was one monotonous brown —but there were variations produced by the alternations of sun and shade, which were truly sublime and beautiful.

The morning after we left the deserted Osage Camp, after two hours' most laborious struggle in the forest, we came unexpectedly in sight of the North Fork of the Canadian. The coup d'œil was one of the most peculiar I ever beheld. We saw before us a meadow of about four miles long by one in breadth, bounded towards the river by a gigantic grove of cotton-wood trees, indicating the course of the river. To the right appeared a large troop of wild horses, and to the left, towards the lower end of the prairie, were seen the huge backs of a number of Bison. Measures were immediately taken to encircle the horses, one division of the party proceeding up the prairie towards them, under shelter of the woods and another, of which my companions and myself formed part, moving cautiously in a long line across towards the river. It was, however, useless to attempt to take them by surprise; they were seen instantly to snuff the air, and burst off towards the river. Their passage was cut off in that direction, when turning southward they rushed at the top of their speed towards our scattered line, charged it unmindful of our shouts, of course broke through it, and were pursued by the whole party, pell-mell, towards the lower end of the plain. Scudding down with them, and for a moment entangled in the rout, I could not avoid keeping my eye upon the Buffaloes, to see what they would decide upon doing. They seemed to have been taking a nap, for they lay very quiet in the long grass, till the tumult coming down from the upper part of the prairie was within half a mile of them; when, with more promptitude than I should have given them credit for, they appeared to have made up their minds that there was something more than ordinary in the wind, and gaining their legs, began shambling off into the forest in such good earnest, that no one could get a shot at them. When the race was terminated by the horses gaining the wooded country, we found that two of their number had been captured; one of the Rangers having secured a fallen mare, while Tonish, mounted on my friend's racer, old Crop, had actually noosed a young foal; an achievement which gave him a subject for self-praise, and self-esteem, for the rest of the expedition. '*Ah! qu-que je vous ai dit!*' reiterated the vain-glorious Tonish!

On the 26th, we met a party of Osage warriors coming back from a predatory expedition against the Pawnees. Horse-stealing seemed to be more the object of their adventure than scalps. They gave us to understand that, as far as they knew, the Pawnees were at present more to the southward, in the vicinity of Red River; intimating that having been unsuccessful in their buffalo hunt, they were suffering greatly from famine, to alleviate which, they had fed upon many of their horses.

These thieving Osage warriors were fine-looking men, and much persuasion was used to tempt them to turn back with us and be our guides, without success. The reasons they gave for preferring to go back to their tribe, rather than repairing with us to hunt the Bison on the Big Prairie, and get presents of tobacco, blankets, and vermillion, were sensible enough. They said if they did not return to their comrades, they would be forthwith supposed dead; their relations would then shave their heads; their squaws would remarry, the Chiefs take possession of their gear, and all that would be a great misfortune. To this we had nothing to say; but gave them some tobacco, shook hands, grunted our adieu in Indian fashion, and saw them no more. They had directed us to bend our course more to the S. S. W. and to gain the source of the creek called the Grand Bayou, a tributary of the Great Canadian, which we did; and encamped early in a very low, damp piece of ground, just contriving to get our tent up, and our accoutrements under shelter, before the heavy rain which had long threatened, set in. Every thing seemed to bode a long continuance of it. The season had hitherto been most genial. It was at once decided by our chiefs to remain in our present position both this and the following day; to rest the horses, to send out scouts and hunters, and to arrange the plans of the party for the return. To that we were now imperatively urged to turn our thoughts. The horses wanted food more than rest; the pea-vine was dead; grass scarce, and likely to be more so, as we knew that the prairies were on fire between us and the garrison. As to pushing across the Great Canadian to the Red River, that was utterly out of the question. It was supposed that we could not now be far from the former stream, and we confidently hoped that on the Big Prairie on its northern bank, we should be enabled to lay in provisions for the return.

The evening and night of this first wet day, long as they were, were soon over; the former by dint of hard eating and conversation within the shelter of our tent; and the latter by twelve hours' unbroken sleep, such as even a racoon might have envied.

In the course of the evening we were vastly entertained by a visit from old Sawyer, who, by reason of his age, his willingness to give a helping hand to our half-breeds when needed, and the originality of his character, was licenced beyond his fellows.

The Rangers, as was natural, began to look to their officers for a decided change of plan, as their own common sense showed the impracticability of our proceeding much deeper into the country in the present advanced state of the season; and Sawyer was as usual pushed forward to sound the intentions of the Commissioner. Like most inordinately inquisitive people, he thought his best way was to be very open-hearted and communicative himself, and thereby to win us over to his own humour. He accordingly, without provocation, gave us the history of his whole life and former adventures:—how he had, after sowing his wild oats, been incited to turn a methodist, and remained such some time, till seeing, as he expressed it, 'the error of his way,' he had become Shaking Quaker, and so forth. The first change was assuredly better than the second. I am obliged to say however, that all this expenditure of confidence elicited no sympathetic disclosures from our quiet friend the Commissioner, and Sawyer at length made a retreat to announce his discomfiture to his comrades.

The following day we opened our eyes and senses to the disagreeable certainty that we were to have yet another day of unceasing rain; and I assure you it was quite long enough, and dreary beyond any thing we had yet experienced.

Both Tonish and Beatte were sent out at an early hour in one direction, to reconnoitre the country, and to get provisions; and the Captain with a comrade set out in another with the same purposes.

As hour stole lazily after hour, the Camp became more and more comfortless. To stir out of the tent was to get both wet and covered with mud. The fires burned without cheerfulness. The rivulet at our side became a turbid yellow torrent. The Rangers lay swopping under their blanket awnings, imitating, in the intervals, to divert ennui, the cry of the birds of the forest, the hooting of the owl, or the gobble of the turkey. Now and then a hasty stroke of the axe was heard, as one or other of their number stole out to get fresh fuel. The poor horses, instead of ranging far and wide from the Camp, as at an earlier part of the journey, with bells tinkling merrily as they tore down the succulent pea-vine; now drew near the fires, and stood nibbling and gnawing the bark of the trees. There was my poor Sorrel, with a clouded yellow eye, and a show of sharp ribs, suffering from a pleurisy—the very picture of misery!

As to the inhabitants of our tent,—we lay watching the preparations for breakfast like so many cats, and when ready devoured it like so many tigers. Pourtales was unwell, having indulged largely in the luxuries of persimmon, sloes, skunks, and sour grapes, and refused both medicine and comfort. In the intervals of conversation, the Commissioner sat the very image of patience, and gave himself up to speculation. Mr. Irving dozed by fits and starts, or perused the only volume of which our camp library was composed; and between whiles, peeped out from the folds of the tent upon the groups around, scanning the individuals composing them with his own good-natured and humoursome eye.

As to your capricious correspondent, what between the use of pen and pencil, and other modes of temporary occupation, the morning stole away quicker than could have been expected. I then, out of pure idleness, engaged in the praiseworthy operation of inquiry into the indisposition of 'Uncle Sam,' as, after doing wonders these latter days,—wounding a dying Bison, killing a turkey and a skunk, he was again reported upon the sick list. And no wonder. By an overthrow he had been filled up to the very muzzle with mud; and after a good hour's work, I succeeded in extracting three inches of ramrod, and made him disgorge another load of ball, buck-shot, and wet powder.

It is hardly necessary to remark that the lateness of the season, as well as our present mode of travelling, precluded my adding to those collections of plants and insects, which I had commenced at an earlier period, and found a source of so much interest and amusement. The only prizes now within my reach, were seeds, for the reception of which I kept a bag at my saddle bow; and crammed into it pell-mell all that came in my way, from those of the largest tree to that of the meanest grass.

As to insects, all now were mute: even the grasshopper chirped no more,—the loquacious catydid had sung his last song,—the wood-bug was dead or asleep, and there was not even a musquito to sound his small horn in our sleepy ears.

Towards night-fall, the various scouts came drop-ing in, and at length Beatte and Tonish, loaded with real Bison meat, of the superexcellence of which we had hitherto heard much, but had so far withheld our opinion; for it was not to be expected that the old pursy bull-beef, which Tonish had served up to us, was the best specimen, nor that we should sing the praises of the meat which we could not masticate. But here we had the choice pieces, the hump and ribs of the fattest cows;—and into the bargain a hunter's tale of their having seen the Big Prairie, which, it appeared, was close at hand, covered with herds of thousands and thousands of Bison and wild horses.

'*Ah! qu-qu-qu-que des bœufs sauvages! Ah! qu', qu-qu-vous verrez demain!*' screamed the delighted Tonish, as sharpening a stick for a spit, he set incontinently about preparing supper.

Had our pleasures not been consulted, necessity would have obliged us to break out from our cover the following morning, and move in search of another camp; as by this time the low jungle, in which the whole party had been lying, soaked with rain for the last forty hours, had become a perfect Slough of Despond, and not a blade of grass was left.

We therefore merrily took our departure, and defiled with our draggled train over the turbid stream, and up towards the higher country and the Big Prairie to the southward.

I promised you a sketch of a Bison chase, and you shall now have one. I could not choose for description, the attack made by nearly the whole troop, upon seven old bulls, reposing peaceably in a swamp, at which, being a mile or two in their rear on the trail of a bear, I was not present:—nor even that on the banks of the North Fork, when, becoming entangled in a rout of wild horses, the objects of our greatest ambition got to covert, before any of the amateurs could fire a shot; but our hunt on the Big Prairie aforesaid, when we fairly overtook the rear-guard of the migratory herd, affords me the desired opportunity.

It was about noon, (Oct. 29th,) when, at the head of the line, we got out of the wood, and saw before us the free and wide horizon of the Prairie. A long day's journey was not in contemplation, as our main object was now to hunt and cure sufficient beef to support us on our return through a gameless country towards the Fort; and it was resolved to halt upon the first favourable spot upon the banks of one of the many tributary creeks of the Grand Bayou, arising on the Prairie, and flowing north, and there to pitch camp.

Consequently, after an hour's advance, the Commissioner, Washington Irving, Pourtales, and myself, accompanied by Beatte, agreed to draw off from the main body towards the Great Canadian, with a general idea of the quarter in which we should eventually find our companions and their camp.

We had not ridden many miles before we discovered divers groups of Bison and Wild Horses, scattered at a greater or less distance over the wide undulating surface of the country. Beatte proposed that we should halt, while he attempted to noose a horse out of a group about two miles to the westward of us; and on the instant, laying his rifle across the saddle of the Commissioner's horse, he dashed off at a wild gallop, and soon neared the herd; when, after appearing and disappearing alternately in mad career, as they fled over the broken surface, both the pursuer and the pursued were finally lost sight of. We had meanwhile been moving quietly forward on his trail, when, coming to one of the hollows, filled with low bushes, frequent on the edges of the Prairie, two old Bison bulls issued from their covert and began to run up the opposite rise. This was too great a temptation for Washington Irving and Pourtales, who were a hundred feet in advance; and both, after a moment's hesitation, gallopped after them. My position was one of most unenviable constraint, as though burning with desire to follow, I was withheld by a feeling of respect for the Commissioner, by whose side I was riding, and who, at the same time that he was no hunter, appeared burdened with Beatte's rifle in addition to 'Uncle Sam.' However, seeing my comrades disappear, my impatience got the better of my sense of decorum, and begging ten thousand pardons, I set spurs to my horse and dashed after them. I remember comforting myself with the hope that Beatte would return to him in a few minutes ; but, however excusable, had any harm come to our worthy friend in consequence of my desertion, I should never have forgiven myself.

In narrating the events of a battle or a hunt, every man is, to a certain degree, of necessity an egotist, for the simple reason that he knows perfectly well his own resolves, and the part which he plays, and next to nothing about those of his comrades. So I must make the narrative of my own feelings and movements, the thread whereon to weave a notice of those of others.

A scamper of a mile over the broken surface of the plain brought me in contact with one of the bulls just mentioned, which had seemingly escaped pursuit by a sidelong course. It appeared probable that neither of my companions had as yet ventured near enough to take effectual aim ; for though this powerful and terrible animal will put forth all his strength to escape the pursuit of man, yet, if brought to bay, or approached too near, he is greatly to be dreaded in the moment of savage ire and desperation ; and if great caution be not used, by horse and rider, one or both may fall victims to their temerity, unskilfulness, or folly.

I am far, however, from wishing to magnify my courage above theirs—for to tell the honest truth, though my horse was both strong and generous, I had received many warnings about the possibility of his taking fright—as he had never before hunted the Bison ; and besides this reason for caution, there was something in the immense shaggy head, mane, and beard of my game—the deep eye that gleamed like a coal of fire from beneath the curls, and his unwieldy bulk, that made me rein in, and rather follow than hunt him;—nay, as often as, shambling on, he turned his head and glanced revengefully on me, I thought it might be more convenient to be off, lest he might take it into that capacious head of his to hunt *me*. However, my blood was excited and I followed him, to watch the effect on the horse, who in fact showed that he entered into the chase with all his heart; till the Bison tumbled head over heels into a deep, red, muddy creek, and waddled through; when I thought I might leave him without compromising my valour, comforting myself with the reflection, that after all done and said, bull-beef was very far from being palatable.

A second chase, which Pourtales and myself at first sustained in company, with laudable perseverance, in a hard run of some miles, ended alike unsuccessfully to both of us. The herd of nine bulls which we had followed split into several small bands. My companion pursued those on the right, and I continued to gallop after a single Bison which I had selected as the object of my attack. After a headlong chace up one swell and down another, over broken ground, and through hollows filled with water and deep red clay, into which my unwieldy quarry precipitately plunged with such unhesitating good-will, that I could not but imitate his example, however little I should have fancied it at another moment,—he led me into a deep marsh, where, spent and breathless, he was brought to bay, and turned upon me. Here we bothered one another a good deal by our several manœuvres for attack and defence, and though I did my best to kill him, I failed to do so. Two of my balls had struck him on the hind-quarters as he ran, but seemed only to act as a spur, for he merely gave his tail a flourish, glanced round at me, and scampered on. Unless you strike the animal at a given spot, below the hump and behind the shoulder, or on the spine, such is the toughness of the skin and the elasticity of the muscles, that the ball seems to be thrown away; and so all mine appeared to be. I was annoyed with my non-success thus far, and with the idea of the clumsy piece of butchery I was attempting, and in fine, extricating myself from the marsh, left him to his fate. Some time elapsed before I rejoined my two comrades, who had both hitherto been unsuccessful. Beatte had also returned from a fruitless chase. He had noosed a horse, but in some of the subsequent evolutions necessary to secure his prize, he had lost his hold on the lasso, and the animal gallopped off. At a later hour, we found he had been again in pursuit for the recovery of the lasso, which he had achieved, but at the expense of the poor animal's life. In attempting to 'crease' the animal, that is, to touch it with a ball on the back of the neck, which stuns it without materially injuring it, he did what many a hunter does in attempting that delicate operation—he shot it dead.

To follow the Commissioner was now his business ; but, finding that we were bent on retrieving our fortunes, he directed our attention to a far more numerous herd of Bison than we had yet seen. They were at such a distance on the Prairie that they looked like a dotted line under the horizon ; but nevertheless we determined to go in chace. We frequently laughed at a later day when we recalled the boyish eagerness and thirst for blood which certainly possessed the soberest and most peaceful amongst us as long as we were within the vicinity of the Bison. To many, this would be unaccountable,—but all such I invite to a month's sojourn in the western wilderness, and an excursion into the Buffalo-range.

It must be recollected that none of us had been at the Camp, and we had but a general idea of the position and course of the creek upon which it was in all probability to be found. We knew that it had been the intention of our companions to pitch it upon one of the streams rising on the Prairie, and running to the northward, while the Great Canadian lay about eight miles to the south of us. Fixing upon certain land-marks, and especially upon the particular aspect of the stream, by following which we hoped to come to our night-quarters, we turned our faces to the opposite point of the compass, and agreed to get if possible to the south of the herd, before we approached them, so that the probable direction of our chace to the north might bring us nearer to the Camp, wherever it might be, rather than remove us from it. After a ride of some miles, we found ourselves in near proximity to the herd, and almost in the desired position, when two bulls at a distance from the rest took the alarm, and beginning to run, the whole body, which might consist of fifty head, got wind of us, and began to put themselves in motion.

The Bison-bull has a most ludicrous movement in gallopping, owing to the great disproportion of the head and shoulders compared with the hind quarters, but for all that he shuffles on at a considerable pace. The cow is much fleeter, and a horse must gallop well that keeps steadily up with her. The latter are generally killed for their meat. But to my tale. We had a fine dashing run of a mile before we neared them. It was my fortune to take the first chance for a shot, as, spurring my horse past an old overgrown bull panting in the rear, I approached the centre of the herd, and came within a proper distance of an animal, bringing it to the ground by a ball which broke the spine. There is no necessity for me to determine exactly how far my good fortune preponderated over my skill; as I agree, that to aim with precision at a time when both you and your quarry are galloping for your lives is not the easiest matter: however, as I obtained a certain degree of credit in the West, for having killed a Bison in true Indian style, I wish to keep the same with you. My comrades were brought to a momentary halt at the fall of the animal, but recollecting themselves, spurred forward after the flying troop. A mile further, Mr.

Irving had his short-lived hunting mania satisfied, as a ball from his gun brought down a second of the herd; and halting as was natural by his game, Pourtales was then left alone in chase, which he continued with undaunted perseverance.

I had alighted to dispatch the first, and to possess myself of the usual trophies, the principal of which is the tongue. To the trample and rush of the chace, a dead silence had succeeded, and I was occupied in my labours, when a slight yelp drew my attention, and, raising my eyes, I saw at a few hundred feet distance, the head of a grey wolf pushed cautiously upwards through the grass. This apparition was followed in the course of a quarter of an hour by as many as half a dozen of a similar character, appearing, as though by magic, on the verge of a circle which they formed around me; till, having secured my trophy, and being convinced that assistance from the camp was out of the question, and that I must leave my prey where it had fallen, I rode off. I then could see them stealing forward cautiously to their meal. The hunter is the wolf's and vulture's provider on these great plains; and they know it, and follow his trail on the Buffalo-range, with the certainty of having their share of the spoil.

After rejoining Mr. Irving, whom I found standing sentinel over his spoil, we did not immediately recollect that the early twilight of a dull autumnal day was drawing on, and that we had still to find our way to the Camp. But where was Pourtales? Before us were the deeply indented tracks of the herd, but they and their solitary pursuer had long ago vanished over the remotest swell of the horizon. We waited and waited, and conjectured, till we dare wait no longer; and then, having looked carefully around us, and recognised some of our land-marks, we began to move slowly northward; pausing often to scan the horizon, and ascending each elevation to look out for the two objects of interest, our Camp and our young friend.

We did not find the former without very considerable difficulty, about seven miles from the place where our Bison had fallen, and that long after the twilight had deepened into night. Here we found the Commissioner safe and sound; but, contrary to our firm expectation, Pourtales was absent, and had neither been heard nor seen by any of the hunting parties. The bugle was sounded again and again, guns fired from time to time, and larger fires than ordinary kept up, all without success; till tired with conjecture, and knowing that no effort of us could avail anything till day-light, we were constrained to give up all hopes of seeing him for that night.

The day's hunt had been successful on every hand, and including our own spoil, we counted ten or eleven Bison killed. Abundance of meat had been brought into camp, sufficient, indeed, to last the whole company for a month if properly cured and stored, and upon the Prairie lay remaining masses over which the wolves were holding their stormy jubilee. One or two of the huge animals had been killed within half a mile of the Camp, and a large number of these depredators seemed to have been congregated to the feast. Such a hubbub of detestable sounds as filled our ears, that and the following night, I think I never heard. It was now a faint melancholy sound; and then the whole pack would break out into full cry. You could distinguish the sharp yell of the prairie-wolf rising over the long-continued howl of the large grey species, as they fed, and snarled, and fought together through the long dark night. I remember it well, for the absence of my companion hung heavy on me, and prevented much sleep; and as Beatte and I sat over the fire in the dead of the night, musing and planning for the morrow, that melancholy concert sounded dolefully in my ears.

LETTER XVI.

THERE were three ways of accounting for the disappearance of my friend. The first, and the most probable was, that he had pursued the herd without thought or attention to direction or distance, or the approach of evening, and had eventually been unable to find the creek upon which we lay. No one could wonder at this, as the commencement of one creek on the upper lands was hardly to be distinguished from another, and you will recollect that none of us had been at the camp previous to the chase. The second surmise was, that he had been turned upon and gored by one or other of the herd; and the third, that he had been fallen in with by some roving band of Indians. However, our duty was clear, and as soon as it was day, a party was in readiness to go on the scout, consisting of Mr. Irving and myself, twelve of the best Rangers, and our three domestics. The general orders in Camp were: that the men should employ themselves in drying sufficient beef to last them for eight or ten days, and that none of them should hunt to the south or east, lest their trails might be an embarrassment to us in the pursuit of our object. We had no difficulty in leading our companions to that part of the country which had been the scenes of our chase, as we had fixed upon sure landmarks; nor yet in putting them upon the trail,—as there lay the Bisons over which the wolves and vultures were still quarrelling; nor did we meet any great interruption in following the track of the animals for a few miles, as the soil was soft, and it was seen that the mark of a horse's hoofs bore them faithful company.

We had proceeded perhaps half an hour in this manner to the south-east, when the appearance of a number of Bison in full gallop, over a distant swell of the Prairee, brought us to a stand.

'*Qu-qu-qu'il est là,*' exclaimed Tonish, whose real zeal and anxiety on this occasion, made us forgive him many of his peccadilloes,—and so we all thought, when a human figure mounted and in full career appeared swiftly passing and vanishing in pursuit. But when a second figure immediately followed, the general impression with us all was, that they were Indians, and that idea linking itself with the fate of our companion, with one impulse we set off in a mad gallop across the country towards the point where they had been seen. We soon crossed their trail; became satisfied at once that they could not be the Pawnees at any rate, as the horses were evidently shod; and after following the track a short distance, found in a hollow two of the rangers who, by disobeying orders, had given us this unnecessary panic. We had now to detect the real trail again, and half an hour was lost in doing it.

By following it further, we shortly after came to the place where it was evident that the object of our search had given up the chase, as the deeply-indented hoof-marks of the herd wheeled off to the northward, and the solitary footsteps of the Hunter were seen to diverge south. Now the greatest care was necessary, and our anxiety was proportionably great. The trail continued good, leading us towards the Canadian, till we came upon hard stony ground, and the country gradually declined to the bed of a creek running due south towards the river. For an hour longer the search continued with increasing interest and anxiety. Our comrade seemed now to have wandered to and fro on the swell, and then down in the hollow among the thickets. We could almost divine the thoughts of the rider from the appearance of the trail. Here he was undecided, and stood to look around him; and there got a bright idea, and trotted briskly on. Sometimes the marks were altogether lost from the nature of the ground; and then our lynx-eyed half-breeds would find it again, by the mere depression of a blade of grass, or a small pebble uprooted from the soil, or a scratch upon the stones.

We had seen game enough during the morning,—bison, horses, antelopes, and deer, but having a superior chase in view, had passed them all by. However about noon, a herd of deer, led by a noble buck, rose so near us, that Beatte could not withhold a shot. The report of his piece was followed by a distant halloo. No object appearing in sight, each spurred his horse in the direction from which the sound came to his ears, and an instant after we saw our lost comrade gallopping towards us; I need not tell you that the meeting was a joyous one, and that none could feel it in a greater degree than myself.

His tale was a simple and straight-forward one. The fall of the second Bison had given him the spur, and he followed the herd, and bombarded them till he had no ammunition left. He then began to think of rejoining us, or at least of finding the camp. As had been surmised, he had been deceived by the similarity of the different creeks, and had taken one leading to the wrong point of the compass. Night came on,—he became convinced he was lost, and after divers wanderings to and fro on the broken ground, in the bushes about the hollow, and in the creek; he wisely resolved not to add to his own fatigue, and to our difficulties in trailing him by further struggles. He therefore fixed upon a large tree within sight of the place where we eventually met, dismounted, tied the forelegs of his horse together with a handkerchief, and let him go loose to shift for himself. A fire he could not make, so he climbed up with the saddle into a commodious fork of the tree, succeeded in making himself a safe and easy seat, and in spite of appetite, cold, and a serenade of wolves, contrived by his own account to get ten hours' sound sleep. The early hours of this day had been passed in comparative tranquillity of mind, as he never doubted but we should be on his trail, and therefore did not move to any great distance from his night quarters. As noon approached and he had seen nothing of us, I believe some anxiety began to creep into his mind; when the shot was heard, and his rescue from his hungry and anxious position followed as related. He deserved and got great credit for his good sense and philosophy.

Our return to the camp was a matter of course. The Grand Canadian lay about three miles south, and some of us made a circuit in returning towards its banks. It is a powerful stream, and by far the longest tributary of the Arkansas. At this point it is surrounded on both sides by open prairies, and bounded by high sand-hills, from the top of which a large extent of its valley was to be seen, with groups of bison and wild horses scattered over it. This part of the country, as you will have gathered, still abounds in game. A small group of goats or antelopes was pointed out to me, but I was unable to approach them to give their figure or appearance with any distinctness. Large flights of starlings were everywhere seen, and numerous bands of snow-white cranes.

But, as an object of natural history, nothing diverted us more than a part of the smooth prairies near our camp, where, for the space of many acres, the surface was marked by the mounds raised by a strange little animal, vulgarly and absurdly called the prairie-dog.[1] They are a species of marmot, of small size, rarely measuring more than fifteen or twenty inches from the top of their nose to the extremity of the tail, with a large head, short ears, and longish body. Like the beaver, they appear to be republicans, living in large communities, in burrows spread under a wide extent of prairie. The sod within their territories was everywhere well-shaven and dry, and had all the appearance of being well-trodden. The opening to each burrow was seen at the top of a little flattened mound of the earth removed in making the necessary subterraneous excavations. In these they are said to live in families. They were very shy and difficult of approach for a man on foot, while at the same time a horseman could ride in among them without giving half the alarm; which was attributed to their being accustomed to the presence of the wild horses of the prairie.

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[1] Arctomys Ludoviciana.

It was amusing to watch their sprightly movements from a distance, and the cautious manner in which they would on ascending from their burrows, raise themselves upon their hind legs like a squirrel, and make a long neck, to see if the coast was clear. If they noticed distant danger, they uttered a sharp and singular bark, and never failed to make good their retreat. I noticed that they were very apt to fall foul of each other, and squabble and wrangle together like some of their republican neighbours more to the eastward.

Their burrows, however, serve for places of retreat to others besides themselves. The burrowing-owl, a distinct species, is frequently found in them, and the rattle-snake and badger also. Our friend Irving threw light upon this singular fact, by shrewdly surmising that these strange gentry were probably the ambassadors and plenipotentiaries of foreign powers at the seat of the Republic; and I believe you will hardly find a more plausible one.

Our camp was that night once more a scene of good humour, contentment, and joyous pastime. Tonish had crowned the success of the day, by capturing another foal; and, in the best humour with himself, put forth all his cunning in the preparation of sundry delicacies, to the enjoyment of which no one had as good a right as Pourtales, after the preceding day's fast and redundant exercise. Though the barking, howling, and yelping, of the wolves seemed to be yet greater on this second night of their feast than the preceding, no one complained of being disturbed by it.

The sun rose bright and clear for the season on the following day; and shortly after, the turkeys and quails, whose call from the edge of the forest would have allured us to go after them at any other period of our tour, had returned to covert;—and as the morning advanced, preparations were made for a remove from our resting-place. It was the last day of October, and we were now to set out on our return home. Our actual distance from the Fort was not known, and in fact we found subsequently, that we had both further to go and more to go through, than we expected—in good truth, that the roughest part of our expedition was yet before us. I shall compress the history of the following eight days' uninterrupted march to the N.N.E. The greater part of the four first we were employed in breaking a painful pathway with many a tear, scratch, and grumble, through the Cross Timbers. Before we reached the vicinity of the Arkansas River we had to recross the Grand Bayou, though much lower down than before,—the North Fork, and the Deep Creek, which seems to identify itself with the Little North Fork of the Canadian. It was by far the most serious impediment in our course, as its great depth and swiftness precluded all idea of fording. With a few hours' delay however, this obstacle was also overcome—the horses were swam across, and a temporary bridge contrived by felling two tall gigantic trees on either side, in such a manner, that when they fell across the stream their top branches interlocked upon and below the surface; so that you might, with a little care, scramble along the trunk, and from the boughs of the one into the other.

Between the two last-mentioned streams, we struck upon a good Indian trail known to Beatte; and two days before we actually arrived upon the Arkansas we gained the edge of the hilly country, and came to a sudden break, whence we gained a view of boundless expanse over the half-burned and defaced prairies for forty or fifty miles towards the great river.

At this time our appearance was that of a discomfited host. Divers of the horses were irrecoverably lost, and the greater part of the Rangers were on foot, their steeds being unable to carry them. In fact, the poor animals had nothing to eat,—the grass was dead or burnt, and we met with no cane before we reached the Arkansas. Added to this, many of the men, with whom it was always a feast or a fast, had proved themselves improvident to the last degree. Some had dried no meat at the Big Prairie, trusting to find abundance for their daily consumption; others had even, as we heard, thrown away their provisions the first day of our return, to avoid the trouble of carrying it, with the same false expectation.

But the fact was, that from the day after we left the vicinity of the Great Canadian, we saw no more Bison. Turkeys were far from plentiful, and deer became extremely scarce: and I believe that if no absolute hunger was the consequence, there was sufficient scarcity in the camp to make the general situation far from enviable.

Our mess was also rather upon short commons, and at our last encampment in a small forest, through which a hurricane had passed and levelled many a noble tree, about twenty miles from the Arkansas,—we too congratulated one another that it was our last. Our small stock of flour, sugar, and salt, was all exhausted: the bundle of '*solidago odora*' which we had made use of as tea, had long been expended. Two of our pack-horses, Old Gombo and his companion, had been left to their fate. Pourtales' Crop, Mr. Irving's generous bay, and my own gallant hunter, had each in turn been left behind through sheer necessity, and the horses which still accompanied us were so emaciated, that, at last, we could not think of riding them. As to our personal appearance, though we all enjoyed excellent health, our wardrobe had reached the lowest degree of poverty, and had I patience to describe how men of dignity and worship like ourselves were attired in each particular, I have no doubt your surprise would be excited. The Commissioner's dignity was completely shrouded in a common soldier's great-coat and pantaloons. Mr. Irving was clad in a suit of shirt armour, or to speak plainly, wore a strong holland shirt over his surtout; and one tail of the latter had been left in the embraces of the Cross Timbers. Certain of Pourtales' integuments fluttered in the wind; and as to myself, though cased in buck-skin from head to foot, there were too many signs of wear and tear in my vestments to allow me any degree of self-congratulation over my fellows.

The weather too, had given tokens of change and of the approach of the southern winter, and as we lay round our fires at night, we heard the whistling pinions of innumerable geese and ducks, winging their way from the north to a more genial climate. The beauty of the year had indeed passed away.

Thus the sight of the first frontier 'clearing' on the Arkansas, about six miles above the Western Creek Agency, was cheering to both animals and men. We reached it about noon on the 10th of November. The Rangers and their officers resolved to proceed no further, but commenced a fearful slaughter among the pigs, hens, and geese, with which they as usual found the log-hut of the backwoodsman surrounded; while their poor jaded horses were regaled with the first good feed they had had for many a long day. Our party, however, determined to push on to the Agency—passing the river in a canoe, and swimming our horses; and at sundown reached the Verdigris after exactly a month's absence, during which we had made a circuit of about four hundred miles.

We were welcomed to the luxuries of maize-bread, sugar, salt, and log-huts: and to as much intelligence with regard to the great world from which we had been for a short period so completely cut off, as could be afforded by those dwelling so far from the scene of important events.

LETTER XVII.

THE object of the expedition, as far as it had extended, had been in one respect accomplished, in that the character of the country between the two great rivers had been ascertained, and found to be such as to preclude all idea of settling the eastern Indians upon it. As you may have gathered, with the exception of the rich alluvial lands of the Arkansas, and a few strips of a like character along the tributary streams, the whole district we had passed over, was in fact a desert, with an ungrateful soil and stinted vegetation. The rock, wherever seen, appeared under the form of a loose friable sandstone loaded with iron. Both the soil and the waters were generally vermillion in colour, and the latter so salt, as to be unpotable in time of flood. There is reason to believe that this is the character of the country for yet hundreds of miles to the westward.

Divers proceedings and arrangements followed our return to this outpost of civilization. Our retainers were dismissed. Indians were sent after the stray horses, and we had the pleasure to see most of them brought in after a few days' delay, and sent to live in cane and clover like their fellows. The Commissioner and Mr.

Irving repaired to the Fort on the Neosho, six miles east of the Agency. It forms an open square, surrounded by a strong log-barricade, on the high bank of the river, with two block houses at opposite angles, and contains the usual barracks, storehouses, and officers' quarters:—many other buildings belonging to the government or private adventurers lying under the protection of its guns. Circumstances made Pourtales and myself fix our quarters on the Verdigris, but frequent visits to the garrison were always a source of pleasure, from the agreeable society we there met with among the officers, many of whom had their families with them. We now heard of the dire visit of the Cholera throughout the West, of the great distress it had caused on board the numerous steamboats, and more especially of the ravages made by the simultaneous appearance of both this mysterious pestilence, and the yellow fever, at New Orleans; besides divers items of intelligence, domestic, foreign, and political, which, though old enough, were all new to us.

Two days after our return, a small steam-boat arrived at the Fort with stores, and we were sorry to see our friend and companion, Washington Irving, resolve to take advantage of it, to commence his return to the East; the more so, as we were obliged, from divers reasons, to delay our departure for a fortnight.

The Commissioner finding that his two coadjutors had not yet arrived, took up his quarters for the winter at the Fort, together with Tonish, who was now taken into his particular service as head cook, valet de chambre, master of the horse, and of course as *grand veneur*. To aid him in the latter capacity 'Uncle Sam' was given into his special keeping. The morning after our arrival at the Verdigris, this veracious personage had made the inhabitants of the little assemblage of log-huts aware of his being in a state of very grievous mental or physical distress, by uttering the most piteous cries and ejaculations,—calling to horse, and jumping about like one distracted, while he vociferously called on his comrade Beatte for assistance. The words which he sung to this most unaccountable solo were as far as we could understand—*Ah! qu-que j'ai perdu ma viande! malheureux que je suis! ma viande de bœuf sauvage!* The upshot was, that he professed to have lost a small parcel of dried bison meat, which he had guarded with uncommon care during our hungry retreat, as an acceptable gift to his two patrons, the Colonel at the Agency, and the Commandant at Fort Gibson, to both of whom it seems he had, in his usual braggart strain, made a gratuitous promise at the moment of starting, a month before. He was with great difficulty consoled, and prevented getting on horseback to ride back fifty or sixty miles to seek it. His very natural and very amiable disappointment was sympathized with; and having been gradually reconciled to the unavoidable and most unintentional failure of his sacred promise, the sorrowful Tonish proceeded with an air of painful resignation with his master to the Fort; when lo! on following him there the day after, the truth comes out. All the while that Tonish was acting the tragic scene just described, the meat in question was to his certain knowledge stowed safely in the centre of the bundle which contained his worldly effects, and was safely braced on the crupper of his horse. The simple fact was, Tonish had eaten the greater part of the intended gift, and knowing that what remained would not bear division between his two patrons, he took this mode of satisfying the Colonel at the Verdegris, while he got the credit of keeping his promise to the Colonel at the Neosho.

I forget whether it was precisely at this period of our intercourse that he got my companion to indite a letter for him to his lonely partner in the village of Florissant, every sentence of which began in his terse and characteristic manner, thus—'*Dis, qu-que je suis bien! Que j'espère qu' elle ma femme se porte bien—que les enfans se portent tous bien et que tout le monde se porte bien. Dis, que j'en ai tué beaucoup de gibier—de daims, et infinement de boeufs sauvages!*' *&c.* This singular personage continued to be a study for me as long as we were in the neighbourhood. He has been hitherto described in the wilds, as pert, noisy, active, and slashing. He now became an altered man. He got a fit of the horribles and rheumatism, both the fruits, as he said, of sleeping in a house. He went about wrapped up in an old grey top-coat, with the collar hoisted high over his ears, and lost both his appetite and spirits. Even his extraordinary success in shooting pigeons and prairie-hens with 'Uncle Sam,' seemed to have no power to nerve his tongue, or to re-open that mine of self-esteem and applause, which lay covered up in some corner of his brain. In the midst of plenty, he was longing after the peculiar dainties of the prairies; and the last trait I have upon record concerning him at this time, was, his great and exceeding affection for a skunk which lived under the flooring of the ruinous log-hut, where he carried on his culinary processes. I detected him feeding it faithfully, morning, noon, and night; explaining, however, his reasons to me aside for so doing, by saying: '*Qu-qu-qu'il devient gras! alors je le mange!*' So much for the purity of Tonish's affections.

The Rangers went into quarters in a rich and retired nook of the shady vale of the Neosho, about six miles above the Fort, where they built themselves huts, and had, doubtless, during the course of the winter months, time enough to swopp at their leisure. Two other Companies, one commanded by a son of Daniel Boone, arrived shortly after, and went into similar quarters nearer the Fort, to be in readiness for an expedition, which it was proposed to send out in far greater force in the early spring, towards the Red River and the Pawnee country, so that the little garrison to which they were attached, and considered as out-pensioners, now mustered eight hundred men. Doubts were entertained by many even at that time, as to this description of troops being of any real utility, or calculated to render effective service; and these were strengthened by the experience gained the following year, with which we subsequently became acquainted. The Government seems ultimately to have come to the same conclusion. They were disbanded the following summer, and a regiment of dragoons, subject to severe military discipline, organized for the frontier service. Of their adventures I know nothing, yet should be inclined to doubt whether at any season of the year, or however organized, a large body of men could maintain itself in the wide plains of the West, in the presence of hostile tribes, who, employing their means of annoyance in continually harassing them, cutting off their stragglers and hunters, and stealing their horses, might reduce those to distress, whom they never could or would attempt to subdue otherwise.

The fortnight which I have mentioned as intervening between our return to the outskirts of civilization and our departure from thence, was spent by each as he listed. A fall of snow, and two or three days' cold weather, were succeeded by a fine genial season of comparative warmth and comfort. We lived in a log-hut attached to the trading establishment of our old conductor, the Colonel, and there were strange scenes and sights daily passing before our eyes among the concourse of Indians of various tribes, with whom this was a point of rendezvous.

'After the weather had become pleasant again, the squirrel, which had disappeared for a while, and was supposed to have gambolled to his heart's content, and to have slunk to the shelter of his store-house in the hollow branch for the winter, was again heard and seen among the dead leaves at the foot of the hickory and peccan-trees: and those countless bands of water-fowl, and flights of pigeons which had been constantly observed passing to the south-ward during the prevalence of the cold wind, ceased to attract the attention.

The prairie-fowl had now completely thrown aside their summer habits. Instead of keeping apart in distinct families scattered over a vast extent of country, like our own grouse at an earlier season; they now appeared congregated in immense flocks in the immediate vicinity of the farms. I had plenty of opportunity of studying their habits, but to shoot a few brace, as they were extremely wild, required frequently hours of patient and wary exertion; whereas, at an earlier season, a sportsman, if aided by a dog, might bag any quantity, from the pertinacity with which they will lie close till forced to fly.

It appeared that at this time of the year all the birds within an area of three or four miles square, congregated together by common consent at sun-down to a given spot in the rank dry grass of the unburnt prairie, to sleep. Many a time have I seen them coming at sun-set from every point of the compass, with their remarkably level and even flight over the swells of the prairie, towards the place of rendezvous, which a few days' observation enabled me to determine upon within a quarter of a mile, and twice I was on the prairie early enough to hear and see them rise, and the sight was such as might make an English sportman's mouth water. Their number must have amounted to many thousands, and the sound of their wings might be heard a very great distance. After rising, for about half an hour they crowd the scattered trees on the edge of the prairie by hundreds at a time, after which they disperse. Their wariness at this time is extreme; and the slightest indication of the approach of man even at a great distance, is noticed by the cock; who, perched on the topmost twig, elongates his neck and peeps first on one side, and then on another, with the most provoking caution. How often have I been foiled, when, after the most cautious approach, either in serpent-fashion like the Indian, dragging myself through the grass inch by inch, or in an upright position, striving to counterfeit a tree stump; never stirring till the sentinel looked another way, and then by imperceptible approaches; and five more feet and five more minutes, would have brought the tree within range,—the careful bird began to grow more and more doubtful and restless, and finally set up that clear tremulous crow which said: 'There's a rogue with a gun almost within shot!' as plainly as though he had spoken English. The instant and complete dispersion of the whole covey to a great distance, would be the immediate consequence. The plumage of this large species of grouse is not so bright as that of our moor-fowl, though composed of the same colours; yet it is a beautiful bird. While I counted the prairie as my hunting ground, it would have amused you to see my companion prowling round the bayous and lakes nearer the Arkansas, to get a shot at the ducks and geese which covered them; employing by the way an Indian urchin to act the water-dog, and bring them out when killed. But this and other equally trivial modes of whiling away that time which we were constrained to stay here, soon brought satiety; and we turned our thoughts with some impatience to the manner of our return to civilized society. We had been given to understand that another steam-boat would probably ascend from the Mississippi within the fortnight, provided the state of the weather and the depth of water in the river permitted it. As this period drew towards a close however, the general impression among our acquaintance was, that none would dare to risk it. The roads to the southward, if roads they could be called, were pronounced impassable: and as we still lingered day after day, in the vain hope that the boat might yet arrive, it began to look a little probable, that having missed the opportunity of return which Mr. Irving had embraced, we should have to winter in the log-huts of this distant Settlement. The season was now far advanced: but still there was one alternative left us, namely, a descent by canoe; and after much contrivance, thanks to the hearty assistance of many hospitable acquaintances at the Fort and the Agency, we got every thing finally arranged, and on the 23rd of November, repaired early to the Fort to take our departure.

A good, sound, stray canoe; about thirty-four feet long, and three wide in the centre, had been picked up by some of the soldiers. This we purchased, and with the concurrence of the officers at the garrison made an arrangement with two discharged soldiers desirous of going down the river, to act as our oarsmen and caterers.

In the afternoon we bid adieu to Fort Gibson, and took our places face to face upon our bear-skins and blankets, in the centre of our trusty canoe; while our baggage was carefully stowed fore and aft, leaving place for the two paddlers, Sergeant Waddle and Private M'Connoghy at either extremity, and put forth into the main current of the Neosho. We were followed from the bank by many a kind farewell from our worthy and respected friend the Commissioner; a grimace of utter despair, accompanied by a blessing, which sounded like an imprecation, from Tonish, and the best wishes of the little knot of gallant officers, to whose frank hospitality we had been greatly indebted.

We were soon carried down into the winding turbid stream of the Arkansas, and began our paddle of five hundred miles with good courage. Our mode of travelling had at that time the charm of novelty, and we were not long in coming to the opinion, that of all modes of water-conveyance, this was the most perfectly free from annoyance. Our light vessel glided noiselessly over the broad surface, or shot down the rapids. Custom made us perfectly at ease to move in her, and change our position without throwing her off her balance. If any thing on shore attracted our attention there was no difficulty in landing instantly. If she grounded, we either poled her off; or if the shoal was extensive, got into the water and dragged her into the main channel again. We carried a quantity of provisions with us; though in general we contrived towards night-fall to reach one of the Indian or half-breed clearings, dispersed at long intervals along the banks, and to remain there till morning. Indeed, we were only once obliged, by the approach of night, to lie in the woods.

For the rest, great were our amusement and the opportunities we had of seeing human nature under singular aspects in our descent towards the more civilized world.

At the approach of the first night we landed just at the head of the rapid called the Devil's Raceground, and found shelter in a Cherokee hut buried in a wilderness of canes, and on the edge of a clearing of perhaps ten acres, covered with the most gigantic crop of maize we ever saw, the average height being twenty feet. The produce was here on the lowest calculation a thousand-fold.

On the second, no clearing appearing in sight, though we continued to glide swiftly down the current far into the twilight: we therefore landed in the belt of tall cotton-wood poplars on the river shore, secured the canoe, made a huge fire, cooked and eat our supper, and lay down to court sleep on our bear-skins. Tent we had none. I recollect, that we had no sooner got every thing arranged for the night, when we became aware by the sounds of cattle and the barking of dogs at a distance on the opposite side of the river, that we were only a mile from a farm: and also that one of those restless nights followed, as far as I was concerned, when the mind appears to be too active to allow repose to settle down upon the body; so that listening to the strange noises from the forest and darkened surface of the river; one moment watching the glare of the fires from the burning prairies on the sky, another looking at the bright stars over-head, twinkling through the branches of the poplars, I fed the fire, pondered many sweet and bitter subjects of recollection or reflection in my wakeful brain, and kept watch.

On the following day, wild and sudden gusts of wind on the river making our advance dangerous, after persevering till about noon, we paddled to the left shore to a thriving Cherokee settlement, and took up our quarters at a half-breed's, called Frenchman Jack. Of all the odd families I ever beheld, this was surely the oddest. The father of the family—a thickset athletic figure, in whom the Indian blood predominated,—was son of a Cherokee woman by a French settler; the mother a full-blooded Indian. Of several children, the eldest was a girl of about ten, of a beautifully fair complexion, with flaxen ringlets and blue eyes, and all the others had the dark lineaments of the maternal tribe. None of the family spoke either French or English, with the exception of a negro slave girl, who acted as our interpreter. The dwelling-house was a substantial log-building of one single apartment, in which there was the strangest mixture of European furniture and Indian apparatus and contrivances. It was constructed without window, with abundance of crockery, clothes, and saddles, all nicely stowed away on shelves and pegs. Two large low bedsteads filled up the angles on either side of the door, and the deficiency of stools was made by boxes of various dimensions which seemed to contain the wardrobe and other treasures of the family. Five other distinct erections of different shapes and dimensions surrounded the principal hut, and served as kitchen, smoke-house, store-house, &c. besides a shed covering the room in which the ordinary garments of the family were woven. Every thing about the premises bore an air of negligent thriftiness; skins of domestic animals, or those killed in the chase, were hung to dry on one side—stacks of fodder rose on the other; cattle and horses rustled in the neighbouring cane-brake; and the fierce-looking pigs, with bristling mane and erect, pointed ears, eyed you a moment with straddling legs, as you strolled through the forest paths, and then, grunting savage defiance, scampered away over the dead leaves. As usual, the dogs were numerous, and seemingly a cross between the dog and the wolf. Every thing had an air of half-breed, and from this the fowls were not an exception; the bodies of the hens were raised up upon long, yellow, unsightly legs to an unusual height, and a peculiar breed of ducks was not wanting to complete the picture. The whole of the premises stood on the bluff bank of the river, at the angle of a clearing, surrounded by a zig-zag fence, and just above the junction of a small creek with the Arkansas. Two or three canoes appeared within the mouth of the former, which was overhung by a group of contorted but noble sycamores, the only trees that were left near the buildings, with the exception of a few tall leafless ones among the huts, which afforded roosts for the numerous cocks and hens.

The storm of wind continuing without abatement, we were content to remain here. As evening approached our attention was rivetted to the opposite banks of the river, from the prairie beyond which a dense smoke had been driving along the horizon the whole day. It was evident that the flames were approaching the river, and as it became dark, they gained the edge of the prairie. They first got into the cane-brake, crackling like a continued peal of musketry, and then burst into the wood of cotton trees over against us. Here urged by the wind, they continued raging for an hour with the greatest violence, producing a splendid effect on both the river and the lowering sky, till driven more to the northward, they began to fail for want of equally suitable fuel. We then slunk to our blankets, lying down on the floor of the common apartment, the crowded state of which however rendered it a perfect stove.

The following day we were enabled to proceed. We got beyond the Indian lands, and at noon reached the small hamlet rising upon the site of the abandoned Fort Smith, at which we made but a momentary halt. We were now gradually approaching a region where white settlements were more frequent; ferries began to be observable on the banks, and the site of future towns marked by the court-houses. What the back parts of Kentucky were some fifty years ago, and the Mexican province of Texas is now, that the country through which we were passing had been in the intermediate period, and indeed till within a very few years back; namely, the sink into which the offscourings of the more settled parts of the country precipitated themselves.

Hither came the restless man, whose impulses led him to keep the outskirts of society, and whose interest in the clearing he had made, the soil he had reclaimed from the thick forest, and the hut he had built, became stifled as soon as the yet distant axe of a neighbour was heard to resound in his neighbourhood, and the smoke of additional clearings arose from the deep blue horizon. He felt no strong tie to the place. His adoption of it had been capricious, his relinquishment of it was no less so; and all the more agreeable associations connected with it were disturbed, the moment others came to share the thinned game, and the trees of the forest could no longer be felled into his very yard. He would complain of the country becoming too crowded, because he could count upon ten neighbours within a circuit of twice as many miles. The sight of a surveyor, and the approach of the law with all its concomitants, would be a source of trouble and disgust to him. Accordingly, he would dispose of his 'improvement' and his live stock to some new-comer for a few hundred dollars; pack up his household stuff, collect his moveables, summon his wife to follow, and, shouldering his axe and his rifle, lead his family forth with comparative pleasure to new scenes of labour; and interposing the mighty 'Fathers of Waters' between him and the advancing line of civilization, dive deep and bury himself in the forests of Arkansas. In the same wilds, the murderer, red with crime, and branded by the laws he thus evaded, sought and obtained a sanctuary from their vengeance. The public defaulter; criminals of all degrees; the speculator; the loose adventurer; — all flocked to the same shades, scattering themselves in the solitudes of the forest, or on the edge of the turbid river; or collected together round the Indian trading establishments, scandalizing their white and Christian parentage by shameless and vicious lives; oppressing the Indian, and often waging the war of the knife and rifle upon another in the spirit of revenge and bitter hatred. In the wake of these would follow a host of disorderly folk, men whom crime, perhaps, had not forced to fly from the precints of civilization, but whom the hopes of a free and unshackled life spent in impunity here, if not that of redeeming their fortunes, would bring across the Mississippi. The spendthrift, the debtor, he who had been enticed to enter into composition with his creditors, and he that had made none. Many a man born and educated for better things, but who living badly or too freely in the old States, lastly mortgaging his estate, and plunging irrecoverably in debt, made over debts and property to his eldest son, stole a horse, and off to Arkansas!

To these might be added, a goodly proportion of the speculative and industrious scions from the 'northern hive' of New England, here represented by a single, plodding, sharp-witted pedlar; there by the owner of a flat, advancing lazily up the river from farm to farm, with a tempting assortment of wares; and again, by a small knot of more stationary adventurers, who, fixing upon a favourable locality, build a log-store, and set up as a respectable firm of five partners, with a joint stock of goods to the value of a few hundred dollars, and a negro slave. At this stage the honest portion of the community, and it is a growing one, feel the inconvenience of having transported themselves beyond the arm of the law. They band together, and cooperate for their mutual security, often under the name of Regulators, forming among themselves that rough court for the protection of the innocent, and the punishment of the guilty, to which I have alluded in a former letter. They begin also to dream of glory, and to form volunteer companies. Thus thirty settlers will enrol themselves into a rifle company, and elect their own officers in such a manner that every individual among them has a title to prefix to his name. From the time the good and orderly predominate, the increase of population advances with accelerated pace. The steady operation of the law follows; the country is taken under the wing of the General Government. It is then surveyed; the authorized sale of lands succeeds, and the possessor of a tract is either confirmed in permanent possession of that which he had taken from the wilderness, by purchase at a low price: or disposing of his improvement, takes the step which I had described at the commencement of this digression. Roads are laid out, districts determined upon, court-houses built, and strong log-built gaols in their vicinity: chapels rise in the middle of the woods, and hamlets thicken into villages, anticipating in their lofty sounding names their future glories, as mighty towns and cities. Then comes the land-speculator, with a host of expectant and hopeful followers, led on by a puff, advancing and fixing themselves in close contiguity, in some paradise of fertility, and in their wake hundreds and thousands of others. At the same time the views of the inhabitants advance beyond mere subsistence, and the rivers begin to be chequered by the flats and other craft loaded with the rich produce of the field and forest, dropping down with the current to the distant market: and the sonorous breathing of the steam-boat is heard in solitudes, where ten years before no craft had ever floated but the light and rude canoe. This is a state of things not genial to the views, tempers, and characters of the first inhabitants. And though the great distance between the various seats of justice and the scattered population would continue for a while to be friendly to crime, and insure it a degree of impunity in many cases, yet the country could not longer be considered an asylum for it as heretofore; and at this day, the Province of Texas has taken the place of the Arkansas Territory.

But we are still on the surface of the river, and its features may demand a few lines of description. As to our two fellow voyagers for the time being, both were originals in their way, though the private, M'Connoughy, was more distinguished for his general good conduct, and his paddling and chewing incessantly, than anything else. As to the Sergeant, he being of Yankee blood, had more than one iron in the fire; and to tell the truth, loved peddling far better than paddling. He had thriftily taken advantage of an offer made him by a trader at the garrison, to take two dollars-worth of goods, in return for one in cash, and having made the speculation, he was now bent upon improving it. The consequence was, that we were fully initiated into the mysteries of peddling, by witnessing his daily attempts to get rid of his chest of finery to the good wives along the river. He was honest, as times go; but could not avoid essaying to give his traffic a lift by many an audacious, but well-meaning lie. I need hardly mention, that the lower we descended, the more frequent the farms became; though they still continued so far scattered, that we had more than once been benighted in our attempt to get over the ten or twelve miles between one and the other, at the close of a day's labour; as, besides the distance, it became very difficult to descry them after dusk, as they were ordinarily a little removed from the bank. However, necessity taught us to betake ourselves to a very simple, and infallible expedient for attaining this object, whenever we were belated; which consisted in our setting up a rough imitation of canine yelping and howling, which as soon as they could distinguish it on the long reaches of the river, was instantly answered by the dogs at the farms. As we descended, the style of architecture gradually improved, and after a long acquaintance with nothing but log-huts, we began to meet with frame and clapboard houses of various dimensions, though it was not till we reached Little Rock, five hundred miles from the Fort, that we met with anything of a yet more permanent character. On the sixth day after the commencement of our voyage, we reached the point called the Dardanelles, and met two steam-boats toiling up the river,—the waters of which had been on the increase ever since the day of our departure; straining every nerve to ascend the stream, and deposit their cargoes either at Fort Smith or Fort Gibson, before the failure of the present rise should leave them aground, to calculate the balance between profit and loss.

Hitherto the scenery had been extremely varied. Our position on the deep bosom of the river, it is true, never allowed us an extended view upon the adjacent country, and was frequently bounded for many miles together, by the forests, sand-bars, and low alluvial lands in the immediate vicinity of its bed, with their green bands of cane, frequented by bears, and turkeys, and long lines of sober grey poplars. Among these the river swept majestically along, sometimes in one broad channel of a third of a mile in breadth, and at others in many different currents, spread over a far greater surface, as its vast bed was obstructed by poplar-covered islands and shoals. At such times frequent breaks were observable in the banks, through which the surplus waters are discharged in the rainy months, into innumerable ponds and bayous. The bright shoals were at this season covered with long lines of ducks, geese, and brants. The extreme vigilance and trumpet voice of the latter gigantic species, rendered approach within shot an utter impossibility. Flights of these birds were seen continually winging their wedge-like phalanx over our heads. Swans were occasionally met with, and such immense flights of pigeons as I dare not describe, lest I should be accused of sharing the inventive powers and dispositions of many of my class. They passed over our heads at irregular intervals with a very swift flight to the southward; their numbers increasing greatly whenever the sky was overcast. While in America, I never succeeded in seeing one of their roosts, but met much evidence confirmatory of the singular appearance presented by the place of their retreat, where millions seem to congregate, breaking down the arms of the trees by their mere weight, and covering the ground to a great depth with their manure. In many parts of the Midland States, the crows are known to congregate in the winter season in the depth of the forest in almost equal numbers.

Whenever the river took a large sweep, we were sure to find a cut-off, or straight channel, opened in the bank, and forming a chord to the arc, by which much of the water of the river passed downwards in time of flood, but at other times is mostly choked with immense quantities of rubbish; and many were our debates and arguments for or against yielding to the temptation of attempting to take advantage of these seducing short-cuts.

Huge accumulations of bleaching driftwood and timber lay piled up at the heads of the islands and on the sand-bars. Snags were abundant, but we were preserved from serious accidents.

Upon the rich alluvial soil displayed to a great depth on the perpendicular banks, we had a section-map of the different depositions for many centuries. They were dark red, yellow, or light-coloured, according to the tributary stream down which the flood, which had deposited them, had come. Thus we knew that the white lines had been deposited by a rise of the Neosho or Verdegris, and the deep red by those of the Red Fork, or Canadian, to the southward. Yet you must not imagine from what I have stated above, that the general surface of the country was level; in fact, this was far from being the case. A chain of hills called the Ozark mountains, of considerable extent to the northward, rise in this part of the great western valley, and often abut upon the Arkansas, presenting steep wooded acclivities on either side, with a small appearance of pine-covered rock towards the summit. At the Dardanelles, the river cuts through a spur of this chain of greater height than ordinary, and forms by far the most picturesque scene found along its course. Below this point, it holds a monotonous and rather uninteresting course for many miles. On the eighth night, we entered with the twilight a singular division of the stream, forming a long basin, broad and tranquil as a lake, with a high pine-covered rocky shore on one side, and a uniform grove of cotton-wood trees bending over the water for five or six miles in a straight line on the other; and from this point to Little Rock, or Acropolis, as the learned prefer to call it, the capital town and seat of government of the territory, twenty or thirty miles distant, the river flowed for the most part in contiguity to the hills, which here and there presented rather a picturesque outline.

We arrived at Little Rock on the morning of Dec. 9th, and, finding the common inns very discreditable resorts, were received with courtesy into a clean and decent boarding-house kept by a respectable Baptist minister.

Though we were aware that the steam-boats which we had seen on their passage up the river, would shortly return to Little Rock, and that we might continue our voyage to the Mississippi by their means, yet we had become so partial to our canoe, and the perfect independence and absence from annoyance which it enabled us to maintain, that we felt inclined to pursue our voyage to the mouth of the Arkansas in her. The distance to Montgomery's Point was yet between two and three hundred miles. An unexpected obstacle to our intention, however, arose in the conduct of our paddler, M'Connaughy, who, true to the impulses of his warm Irish blood, unfortunately fell into bad company the moment he got ashore; and partly terrified by the idea of confronting the Cholera, which was still reported to rage in some of the Mississippi steam-boats; partly cajoled by the hope of lucrative employment, and lastly, through the incapacitating effects of whiskey, resolved to remain here.

We had therefore, whether we would or no, to wait for the first steam-boat. It came down the river the following day, after we had passed a quiet Sunday in very comfortable quarters. Of Little Rock, I can say little, but that it is one of those thriving places frequently met with, where society is still in a ferment; the good and the evil being strangely mixed up together.

The 'Rein-deer' made but a short pause, and early the following morning started with its freight and passengers on its downward course.

So here, in a measure, we finished our wanderings in the Far West, and that with real regret. Every species of travelling has its lessons, and this had not been wanting in such. During our journey of a thousand miles in this region, we had become acquainted with much of that species of knowledge which is the stay of the hunter, and gives him assurance in the vast solitudes of the trackless forest and prairie. Many a secret of horse-craft and wood-craft had been revealed to us. We had been taught to distinguish the trail of one animal from another,—to steer according to the tokens afforded in sunless days by the trees of the forest and the plants of the prairie of the side from which the north wind blows, or the sun should appear,—to know the track of Indian friend or Indian enemy,—to distinguish their forsaken camps and to read their hieroglyphic signs graven on the trees. We had found that to sleep unhoused, night after night, for a month together, in the damp air of the deep forest, is not necessarily followed by colds, sneezing, or consumption; and that one may contrive to live on animal food without bread or salt, without indigestion. We had been shown how to follow the bee from the flower to his distant hive in the hollow oak; and when the tree was felled, how to despoil and rifle the gathered sweets. Whether always successful hunters or no, we had learned to be patient and good-tempered ones,—to provide fire under many disadvantages, and to kill and cook our supper under as many more. Lastly, we had learned to paddle a canoe; make our own mocassins; and bag a Bison. Were not these accomplishments worth crossing six thousand miles of sea and land to acquire?

There was one art, however, among some others that shall be nameless, in which I honestly confess for my part, that frequently as I have tried to perfect myself in it, I never could attain the most distant success. That is the art of decoying, which is at best an evil one. As to the mode in which the hunter and the Indian will attract the deer to their destruction, by 'bleating;'—taking the gentle animal's life by treacherously exciting its natural sympathies,—there is something so heartless and diabolical about it, that I trust nothing would tempt me to practise it. Yet I plead guilty to having sometimes tried to coax the turkeys in rather an extraordinary way. Those feelings of pity and compassion which were easily excited in behalf of the deer, were certainly a little obtuse in the case of these feathered bipeds, and it seemed as though they had been without the pale of my sympathies. The practised hunter will induce them to approach him as he steals through the grass, by a skilful imitation of their gobble and piping. But, often as, buried in the thick cane brake, and watching one of those little openings where the birds sun themselves, I heard the tread, rustle, and voices of the turkeys around me, and have attempted to allure them to me by an imitation of their notes. I never succeeded in a single instance. I set up, for example, a weak, amorous, sentimental piping like the female—it was in vain! no broad-backed, round-tailed, burly turkey-cock made his appearance. I gobbled in the most seducing fashion, throwing as much devotion into my tones as I could contrive; I essayed to compress a thousand blandishments into the few gutteral sounds that were permissible, but these, far from eliciting any sympathetic response, seemed to put the whole gang to instant though cautious flight; for I invariably observed that very briefly after an attempt of the latter kind, every sound became hushed, but the beating of my own impatient and disappointed heart. It was evident that there was no mistaking me for a turkey, and all the birds that I ever brought to the mess, were the fruits of a less guileful, more straight-forward and summary mode of proceeding.

But you have now the sum of our attainments. What use we were to make of them on our return to civilized society, we could not tell; but we were well satisfied with our adventures, and the acquisitions consequent upon them; and, I trust, not unmindful of, or ungrateful for, the merciful preservation we had experienced from many evils, hidden and apparent, and for undiminished health and strength.

Though we had now determined to repair in all haste to the Atlantic cities to pass our winter, we at this time meditated a return for a second campaign in the Buffalo-range the following year—but you will see, if our patience is mutual, how that project was defeated; and how, though we again visited the West, we eventually bent our attention and steps in another direction, and towards another remarkable feature of the American Continent.

Below Little Rock, the river seems to have escaped from the hilly country, and, with few exceptions, to roll his red waters through a comparatively monotonous region. A few pine-covered bluffs of moderate elevation appear on the shore from time to time; for the rest, the eternal forest and the belt of cotton-wood poplar bound the view on both sides. The latter tall and shapely tree is the spontaneous growth of the soil throughout the rich alluvial plains of the West. Whenever the earth is torn from the outer edge of the sweep, and thrown up on the inner, they instantly spring up in a thick and even grove, and in six or eight years are large enough to be cut for the use of the steam-boats. The beauty and regularity of the semi-circular bends of the Arkansas are very striking. The width does not increase proportionably, as might be expected from its great length of course, and the volume of many of its tributary streams,—but this, as remarked before, is one of the singular features of all the great western rivers. A large quantity of surplus water is drawn off into the numerous lakes and bayous by which the lower region is intersected. These bayous appear covered with aquatic plants, many of them most striking in size and beauty of flower,—and they formerly were the favourite resort of the Alligator, though few are now found as high as this latitude.

The only remarkable town below Little Rock, is the Post of Arkansas situated on the left bank, and that, less on account of anything in its appearance, than for its antiquity, having been settled by the followers of Ferdinand de Soto, the first discoverer of these southern regions, from Florida to the frontiers of Texas, as early as 1540. He penetrated with a thousand men from the peninsula of Florida, across Alabama and the Chickasaw country to the Mississippi. He was probably the first white man who beheld that river. Since that time, the town has been in continued occupation by the Spanish and French Creoles; the latter of whom form the bulk of its population to the present day.

Our steam-boat was of small size, but otherwise commodious, and had it not been for a large and heavily-laden ark which she towed along side, our voyage would have been both agreeable and speedy. About noon on the second day, we turned out of the river into the singular natural canal or bayou called the Grand Cut, which connects the waters of the Arkansas with those of White River. It is about six miles long, and serves in time of flood to discharge a portion of the surplus water of either river into the other. At this time the Arkansas was flowing into White River, mingling a turbid stream with the pure current of its neighbour. A subsequent descent of a few miles brought us to the Mississippi once more, and after stemming its current for an hour, we reached the store-houses at Point Montgomery, where we landed to await the arrival of the first steam-boat ascending the river. 'The Reindeer' then wheeled round and pursued its voyage towards New Orleans, six hundred miles distant.

We were detained nearly two days at the Point, looking with anxious eyes on the broad bosom of the mighty river, which is here of great width, casting up immense beds of sand, in which may be seen the wrecks of numberless boats, rafts and arks, half embedded in the soil between high and low water-mark. Truly this is the 'terrible Mississippi!'

Montgomery's Point did not, at the time I speak of, rank either in fact or in courtesy above a small hamlet, and was apparently merely of importance as the point where goods might be deposited; and whence the steam-boats ascending the Arkansas and White River could take their departure. In this portion of the valley of the Mississippi, the settlements are yet wide apart—but if the events of the future can at all be augured by the past, many years cannot elapse before the whole of this immensely fertile region will teem with inhabitants. I remember listening in the dusk of the evening to the sounds which were borne across the wide river, indicative of the presence of man—the axe, the horse-bells in the cane,—the cry of the women following the cattle; those sounds which are the first to break the silence of the forest, and soon to be followed by the hum of crowds and din of manufactures.

Forty years ago, there were but 150,000 white inhabitants sprinkled throughout the confines of the great valley of the Mississippi; and now probably four millions and a half, at the same time that every avenue, from the east and south is crowded with fresh accessions.

It would be utterly out of the question to compress into a sheet or two of post paper, even the outlines of those topics of interest which have a reference to the phenomena, features, and past and present condition of this great valley. Leaving you to consult Flint's Geography for a vast mass of information which the patient and worthy author has collected, I can only throw together a few hints for your present perusal.

Of all the rivers which drain that great central valley, which occupies the whole of the interior of the North American continent, from the Rocky Mountains to the Alleghany, and from the Mexican Gulf to the Icy Sea; the Mississippi is doubtless the most remarkable, both from the length of its course and that of its confluents; its individual character; the natural phenomena connected with it, and the great fertility of the region through which it flows.

The central part of the basin from which both the Mississippi, and the other great drains of the Valley diverge to the north, east, and south, you must look for in that wide extent of level country, covered with innumerable lakes and swamps, which lies to the north and east of the great lakes. There, interlocking with one another without any intervening ridges, the innumerable sources of the Mississippi, St. Lawrence, the rivers of Hudson's Bay, and those of the Icy Sea are to be found; at first filtering, or flowing sluggishly from one wide lake to another, and through rice covered swamps,—the home of myriads of water-fowl, till the accumulated waters take a decided bed, and the direction which God has marked for each. Many of these rivers, by turning to the northward, run further and further from those temperate regions where man has fixed his main seat; and little or nothing of them is known. With the two principal, however, the Mississippi and the St. Lawrence, it is otherwise; and though, as yet, but a small part of the immense regions which they water are fully explored, and still less brought under the hand of man; yet, the day appears to be approaching, when in all probability they will be the seat of millions. The idea which has been entertained by many that the whole of these central parts of the Continent were once submerged, and that the entire breadth of the region between the Alleghany and Mountains of Labrador on the one hand, and the Rocky Mountains on the other, was one unbroken sea, may appear extravagant to those who have had no opportunity of visiting the West, or viewing the phenomena which they present in detail. I can only add one to the number of those who would feel inclined to maintain the probability. The whole region through which the Mississippi flows, from the Falls of St. Anthony, which we reached as you will find, in the following year, bears ample evidence of this having been the case, or at least such as it would be very difficult to refer to any other theory than that of the Ocean having gradually retired, leaving the waters gushing out on the surface of the earth to follow and wear themselves channels through the inclined plane, as they pursued the retiring footsteps of their great parent to the several points of the compass. If not to this great natural revolution, to what shall we refer the evident proofs of the gradual descent of the bed of the Mississippi, to be gathered from the marks of the gentle, but long-continued action of water in the upper parts of its course, where the river has worn itself a bed many hundred feet deep; or the regular horizontal deposition of earthy strata. What will account for the appearances afforded by the wide open prairies, or the vast salt-covered plains of the Far West, and as you descend towards the Gulf to those portions of the country, from the surface of which the waters of the ocean must have retired the latest, and upon which time has not yet laid the same load of alluvion which covers the country more to the north?—whence those vast collections of gigantic sea shells, on and under the surface, to the depth of forty and fifty feet?

Leaving the St. Lawrence for the present, my subject is now the valley of the Mississippi, which, taken in its wide sense, comprises the whole of the region between the Lakes, and the Gulf, and the Rocky Mountains, and Alleghany, and as such, is the largest on the globe. As to the propriety of the Mississippi retaining its preeminence as the main river, in spite of the greater length of the Missouri, I have elsewhere remarked that it is evidently the central river of the region.

The whole Valley is considered as lying between two great planes. The eastern is comparatively narrow, and consequently the tributaries to the main river on that side have a shorter course than those on the opposite, which extends to the base of the Rocky mountains, and over which flow the Missouri, Arkansas, Red River, &c. and their own tributaries.

Of the Mississippi, above the junction of the Missouri, I may find an opportunity and leisure to tell you more at a future day. It may be said to be a beautiful river throughout the greater part of its upper course; but that epithet is no longer suited to it, after its pure waters have been discoloured by the junction of its great tributary, the Missouri. Then, from a comparatively calm, transparent stream, flowing with a silvery surface between varied shores, among islands and bright sand-banks,— it becomes, for the remaining part of its course, a dark, turbid, and boiling torrent, sweeping forward with irresistible fury; covered with large convex swells and whirls, like a boiling cauldron; and in its terrible alternations between flood and low water, producing such sudden changes in the surface of the alluvial region through which it flows, as no one can have an idea of who has not seen and marked them.

In the part of the bed of the river below its junction with the Ohio, enormous wreck-heaps, shores cut down perpendicularly to the water's edge; vast deposits of mud and rubbish; land slips caused by the undermining of the banks—when the soil, with all its rich burden of cane and forest, goes headlong into the flood, and is carried away to be deposited elsewhere,—are throughout to be seen. Here the stranger is shown a bed of sand and soil extending over four or five thousand acres, deposited where four years before the river had its bed; there a 'cut off,' where, in time of flood, the headlong torrent had burst over the narrow neck of land which separated the opposite points of the great curve which it had hitherto followed. These regular semi-circular sweeps, often twenty miles in circuit, are a common feature of the parent stream as well as of its tributaries, and display the same phenomena on a yet greater scale. There you see the perpendicular outer line eating into the land, and the inner, where the new deposits are made, with the smooth bar swelling from the water's edge, covered by its plantation of cotton-wood trees, rising in regular degrees, from the red scions of last year's growth, to the grey trunks of the full-grown tree. Innumerable ponds and bayous beyond the present course of the river, choked by accumulations of timber and aquatic plants, mark the spots over which it had formerly run, but which have been forsaken in its strangely capricious movements. Man has profited by this inclination, and by the application of a little labour at the Grand Cut-off, the steam-boats now pass through an isthmus of less than a mile in length, instead of making a circuit of twenty.

Like all its great tributaries, the Mississippi is as broad, a thousand miles from its mouth, as at the point where it disembogues; and even at its junction with the Missouri, fifteen hundred miles from the Gulf, it is broader than at New Orleans. Still eight hundred miles higher, at the foot of the Falls, it is only one-third less in breadth than before that city. As you descend it, you see it receiving river after river, one broad stream after another, but you notice no accession to its width. The Missouri, —the Ohio,—the Arkansas, the Red River, pour in their floods of waters—all seem swallowed up in a bottomless channel. The mud of the Missouri, and bright red of the Arkansas, colour its waters, and perhaps add to its impatience and swiftness, but not to its expanse. After its junction with the Red River, the Mississippi carries its greatest volume; as about two leagues below, the first important bayou opens in the right bank, which, though four hundred miles from the ocean, carries off a portion of the waters to the Gulf. This is the bayou Atchafalaya, which is believed to be the ancient bed by which the Red River communicated with the Gulf, ere it became a tributary of the Mississipi. Below this point the outlets are numerous.

The medium breadth of the river below the Missouri may be considered as a mile from bank to bank, with a current of four miles an hour in ordinary stages of the same; but it often expands to a much greater width; and seen from the bluffs of Memphis, for example, with its wide shoals, islands, and indented shores, it struck me as much more resembling an arm of the sea than an inland river.

As to insurmountable impediments to the navigation from the Gulf to the Falls, there is none beyond those which are caused by occasional low waters at the De Moines Rapids, fifteen hundred miles from its mouth, and the severity of the winter, in the higher parts of its course.

Those vast accumulations of drift timber which are remarked on some of its tributaries, growing year by year, so as entirely to impede the navigation, are not found in any part of the main river. Towards the delta they indeed form the basis upon which the sand and mud subsides, and give rise to the innumerable acres of new land, by which the continent is yearly encroaching upon the domain of the ocean. By far the most remarkable accumulation of this kind in the West, I may observe, was the Great Raft, obstructing the navigation of Red River a few hundred miles above its point of junction with the Mississippi, where, owing to natural causes, a compact body of floating timber, one hundred and forty miles long, and from half a mile to a mile in breadth, interposed, till lately, a stupendous and yearly increasing barrier to the navigation of the higher parts of the river. That this should ever decay or be cut away would have seemed a hopeless expectation, and so any one would have said in 1832; but in the course of the succeeding year, an attempt was made by Captain Shreve, who by making a few judicious cuts succeeded in actually clearing away seventy miles of the Raft, and the steam-boats then ascended as far as the Caddo Agency, a point seventy one miles higher than could be reached by them in the spring. The Raft was found to cover full one third of the whole surface of the river, with a medium depth of twenty-five feet of timber, often compact and solid to the very bottom. Seventy miles still remained to be removed, but that has been probably done by this time. In the Missouri and Mississippi, the greatest danger to navigation arising from natural causes, may be justly attributed to the position of trees deeply embedded with their roots in the river, and called according to their fixed or moveable position, snags, planters, or sawyers; and so great has been the loss of life and property by the steam-boats striking on them, that, herculean as the task may appear, the attempt has been made to free the river from this impediment, partly, by destroying the snag, and partly by cutting down the timber on the banks. For the former purpose two steam-boats of peculiar construction have been employed for some years, under the direction of the above-mentioned engineer, and much has already been done. In the twelve months terminating in September 1833, the two snag-boats under his direction had raised and cut off 1960 snags, and in the intervals, when high water prevented the pursuing this branch of their labour, the crews had felled ten thousand trees from the banks. But it is time to bring this letter with its various contents to a conclusion.

LETETR XVIII.

On the evening of the second day, a small cloud of white steam, seen like a star in the dark blue shade of the forests, seven or eight miles off; announced the approach of a steam-boat toiling up the river. In half an hour's time we could distinguish the sonorous breathing of the scape-pipe, and by the time that the wild song of the negro fire-men reached the ear, all was bustle and preparation. The bell on shore was rung to bring the steamer to; and jumping into a wherry, we found ourselves on board the 'Cavalier,' a boat of the second or third class, bound from New Orleans to Pittsburg, and took possession of the berths which we eventually retained, till our arrival at Wheeling a fortnight after. We found that since they had left the city, they had had no case of cholera on board, and thanked God with all our hearts.

You may imagine us then toiling for thirteen hundred miles and upwards against the rapid currents of the Mississippi and Ohio. This, at a season when natural scenery had lost its charm, you will suppose must necessarily have proved a trial of patience. In some degree I grant that it was such, nevertheless not so great as might be argued by those who know the impatience of modern travellers; and now that it is over, I look with interest upon all that we learned or experienced.

I will not, however, present you with any thing in the form of a journal. It was the 5th of December when we left Montgomery's Point: we halted at Memphis in Tennessee on the 7th, and reached the Mouth of the Ohio on the 10th. Little did we forsee that that very day twelvemonth we should be again at the same spot on our descent from the Falls of St. Anthony to New Orleans.

We found that the Ohio was in flood, and at Louisville, which we reached on the 13th, the steam-boat passed straight up the Rapids, instead of going through the Canal. The 15th was spent at Cincinnati, and finally on the 21st we landed at Wheeling, and continued our route by land over the Alleghany to Baltimore. But I have still some scenes and events to record before we quit the West.

Poor M'Connaughy! He made his appearance on board the 'Cavalier' in piteous plight. A few days before, he was sober—possessed of a good character—with good prospects; home before him and ninety dollars ready money in his pocket. He was now stripped of clothes, sense, character, and cash. At Little Rock he had met with one of the numerous gang of sharpers always lying in wait for the weak and unwary. He quarrelled with his companion for giving him good advice; and after being well flattered and then made tipsy, he became the complete dupe of the unprincipled crew. He first, as related, broke his engagement with us and wished to stay. He then suddenly made a tipsy resolve to descend the river and continue his voyage home by steam-boat: but his new-found acquaintances stuck to him like blood-suckers.

The sharper, whose dupe he had principally been, had come on board the 'Rein-deer,' ragged from head to foot, half-drunk, with his head tied up in a dirty cloth, his linen sprinkled with the blood of the last broil:—but as M'Connaughy wained he waxed, and after a day spent in gaming, swopping, and debauch at Montgomery's Point, the two parties were seen in very altered guise, to wit: Private M'Connaughy, so exceedingly tipsy that he could not tell his shoulder from his elbow,—flushed,—without shoes or waistcoat,—attired in a torn blue surtout with a faded velvet collar, for which he had given twenty dollars, a pair of old drawers hanging over his heels, no hat, and pennyless. Mr. M'Sharper, exceedingly decent and sober; garbed in a good pair of military trowsers, an excellent blanket coat, a pair of span new boots, a pocket full of money, and a chest full of clothes. All his backers too looked the better for this fortuitous gleam of sunshine.

The upshot of the business was that our poor tipsy paddler was left ashore, through his own carelessness, at some landing place, about three hundred miles up the river, and thus had probably to begin the world anew: and as to the principal swindler, the bandaged ruffian, he, being detected before he had been a day on board, in the act of theft, was, on the whole affair being represented to the Captain, promptly set on shore on a sand-bar in the middle of the river, to shift for himself. Prompt justice and well-earned,—almost worthy of the good old reign of the Regulators.

No sketch of mine could give you an adequate idea of the steam-boat of the West. From the epoch of the launch of that solitary Wanderer, whose first voyage I have elsewhere recorded, up to the close of 1833, it is computed that about five hundred boats of various sizes, from one to five hundred tons burden, had been constructed or run upon the Mississippi and its tributaries. A very small portion of these were built prior to 1820, and the number of new boats launched yearly, for several years back, is stated to have been upwards of fifty.

There is a great difference between the build and interior arrangement of the Eastern and Western steam-boat, and both are essentially distinct from those unadorned but compact vessels, which, propelled in the same manner, buffet the boisterous and dangerous billows of our narrow seas, straits, and roadsteads.

As to the Eastern steam-boat, the whole of the hold is converted into cabins—the transport of heavy freight being no part of the speculation; they are superior in finish and durability, but not in appearance, to those of the West, and cost much more; being, moreover, almost invariably furnished with low-pressure engines. On the contrary, the whole of the hull of the steam-boat of the West being appropriated for the transport of goods, the cabins are generally constructed upon the main deck. The vessels consequently appear much higher out of the water, and every one must be greatly struck at the first sight of these huge floating palaces, with their double tiers of gay cabins. The boilers, which are cylindrical, and vary from four to double that number, are placed forward on the main-deck, and behind them the machinery is arranged towards the centre of the vessel, enclosed between the huge paddle-boxes and a row of offices on either side. The great cylinder lying in a horizontal position, the piston works on the same plane. Thus in the western boat the whole arrangement and movement of the engine is horizontal, while in the east it is perpendicular. Sometimes a ladies' cabin is constructed on the same deck, in the stern of the boat; but, more generally, this part is given up to the so-called deck-passengers, and the whole range of superior cabins is built upon an upper deck, extending from the stern over that part of the vessel where the boilers are situated, the portion most in advance being called the boiler-deck. Through the latter, the great chimney pipes conducting the smoke from the fires below ascend, and as the range of cabins do not extend quite so far, the open space and view afforded by it, renders it a favourite lounge. Of the disposition of the cabins little need be said. The ladies' apartment is aft, and opens with sliding doors and curtains into the main, or gentleman's cabin, which is frequently fifty or sixty feet in length. Both are furnished with handsome tiers of upper and lower berths, canopied with ample chintz or moreen curtains, and the former cabin is frequently fitted up with state-rooms. A gallery runs round the whole exterior. Between the forward end of the great cabin and the boiler-deck, ten or fifteen feet of the deck is ordinarily occupied by a Bar, washing-room, captain's and stewards' offices, ranged on either side of an anti-chamber. On some of the larger class of steamers, there is yet a third deck and range of cabins before you come to the roof, or hurricane-deck—upon the forward extremity of which the glazed and painted cabinet, containing the tiller, is placed, affording a lofty and unimpeded view of the channel.

As to the question often started with regard to the safety of the principle upon which the machinery is generally constructed in the West, much might be said in favour of high-pressure engines; and in spite of my full consciousness of the great danger attending them, when placed, as they frequently, are under the care of incompetent and careless persons, I think that the reasons given are good. These are chiefly founded upon the character of the waters navigated; their turbid state, their extraordinary swiftness, requiring the application of great power: the far greater simplicity of construction of the high-pressure engine,—all the complicated condensing apparatus being dispensed with, which is of great consequence on a navigation where the boat must proceed five or eight hundred miles without the possibility of repair;—its superior lightness, and its being calculated to work off all the steam which is generated; and lastly, the mud is not apt to accumulate so fast in the boiler of the high-pressure engine, being blown out at the safety valve, while under the low-pressure system it must continue in the boiler, and by interposing a stratum between the water and the iron, the latter is sometimes burnt through, and explosion takes place.

Yet, though it may thus be well maintained that the high-pressure engine is better fitted for the Western navigation,—as long as the accidents upon those waters are so frequent, and the loss of human life so great as it has been for some years past, it is no wonder that great prejudice must exist in the minds of many with regard to the system pursued. It is not, however, the principle which is wrong, it is the careless use of it. The history of steam-boat disaster is one of the most terrible and revolting imaginable; and the disregard of human life which is as yet, generally speaking, a feature of the West, is a sure proof that the standard of moral feeling is low.

I have seen so much during four or five thousand miles of steam-navigation in this part of the country, as to believe, that there are few voyages of more evident peril in the world than that from St. Louis or Louisville to New Orleans, or vice versa; for, leaving out of the question the casualties incident to the navigation, arising from snags, ice, rocks, fire, or being run down, in consequence of which numbers have perished, —the peril which impends over you from a tremendous power like that of steam, being left under the direction of incompetent or careless men, is a constant and fearful one.[1]

The sketch of a day's proceeding on board will perhaps give you a livelier idea of our position, and of the scenes connected with it, than can be otherwise conveyed.

State-rooms are not always to be had by gentlemen, as they are commonly found to be attached to the ladies' cabin alone—but in case they are unoccupied they may be secured, and your position is so far more than ordinarily a favoured one, as you have private access to them by the outward gallery. Otherwise it must be conceded that nothing is omitted that the known ingenuity of this people can contrive, to render the berths in the main cabin as tidy and ornamental in appearance by day, and as secluded and convenient by night as circumstances permit of. They are so arranged, that when you retire to rest, the thick curtains with their vallance can slide forward upon brass rods, two or three feet from the berth itself, and thus form a kind of draped dormitory for you and your companion.

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[1] By a published list of the steam-boats lost on the Western waters, from July 1831, to July 1833, their number would appear to be sixty seven; viz.—seven burnt under weigh; nine in port; twenty-two snagged; two sunk by rocks; five by running foul; seven by ice, and fifteen abandoned as unfit: and previous to that time, out of one hundred and eighty-two, which had been on the river, but did not exist in 1831, sixty-six had been worn out; thirty-seven snagged; sixteen burnt; three run down; four or five stove by ice or rocks, and thirty destroyed otherwise.

About an hour before the time appointed for breakfast, after the broom has been heard performing its duty for some time,—a noisy bell rung vociferously at the very porches of your ear, as the domestic marches from one end of the cabin to the other, gives notice that the hour of rising has arrived, and it is expected that every one will obey it and be attired in such time as to allow the berths to be arranged, and the whole cabin put in its day-dress, before the breakfast, which like all the other meals is set out in the gentlemen's cabin, is laid upon the table. In vain you wish to indulge in a morning dose and thus to cut short the day; every moment your position becomes more untenable. Noises of all kinds proceed from without. You persevere—shut your eyes from the bright light which glares upon you through the little square window which illumines your berth, and your ears to all manner of sounds. Suddenly your curtains are drawn unceremoniously back, the rings rattle along the rods, and you see your place of concealment annihilated and become a part of the common apartment, while the glistening face and bright teeth of the black steward are revealed, with eyes dilated with well-acted surprise, as he says, 'Beg pardon! Colonel; thought him war up: breakfast almost incessantly on de table.'

He retrogrades with a bow, half-closing the curtains; but you have no choice, rise you must. Happy he, whose foresight has secured to him all the enjoyment of the luxury of his own clean towels, as none but the disagreeable alternative of drying his person by the heat of the stove, can be the fate of him who has not done this. As to making use of the common articles, hung up for the accommodation of some thirty citizens in rotation, no one need blush at being termed fantastically delicate in avoiding that. There exist yet certain anomalies, in a position, and under a state of society, like that found on board these boats, which, though they may not surprise a thinking mind, and may be accounted for, are far from being either pleasant, or usual elsewhere. And the arrangements made of the above class are surely of this kind.

But I do not dwell much on these fertile subjects for a traveller's maunderings, for four reasons. First, because they are but blots on the general picture, and as blots they are considered by all those Americans whose opinions are worthy of attention. Secondly, others more competent to the task, have contrived to make them sufficiently notorious. Thirdly, time and a sense of common propriety may have already produced changes for the better; and, lastly, they are disagreeable both to recollect and to detail.

During the interval which elapses between your being thus unceremoniously ousted from your quarters and forced to begin the day, and the ringing of the breakfast-bell, you may walk forward to the boiler-deck, and satisfy yourself as to the progress which has been made during the hours of darkness; or, if you choose to follow the custom of the country, and the example of a great majority of the passengers, you may linger in the antichamber opposite the bar, and take the glass of wine and bitters, which the prevalence of that common complaint of the United States, dyspepsia, finds a bad apology for. The Americans, as a people, are far from being intemperate; if by intemperance you mean absolute inebriety, of which less is seen, as far as a casual observer like myself might judge, than in any country of Europe. But if by intemperance, you understand a habit of the frequent unnecessary indulgence in stimulants, and dram-drinking, then do they richly deserve the stigma; though the improvement, and the return to sound feeling in this respect, has been so general in many parts of the Atlantic States, that the stricture can hardly be applied to them. But in the West and South, the custom prevails to a degree ruinous to the moral and physical strength of a great part of the male population. And whoever has been witness to the mode and the marvellous rapidity with which the hot cakes and viands of the plentiful tables of steam-boats and hotels are cleared and consigned to the stomach, without the possibility of having undergone the natural process of preparation, which nature has indicated as advisable, both from the number and construction of the human teeth and the original smallness of the swallow—need seek no further into the arcana of natural causes to account for the pale faces, contracted chests, and lack-lustre-eyes of a great number of citizen travellers in all parts of the West. Compared with this, what are the effects of climate or sedentary life—or even the possible hindrance to a natural and easy digestion, consequent upon the internal heat generated by republicanism, and the weight of democratic cares?

But I have anticipated breakfast by alluding to its principal feature. The table is spread with substantials, both in profusion and variety; and considerable impatience is generally observable to secure places, as it frequently happens that the number of cabin passengers is greater than can be seated with comfort at the table, however spacious. The Steward, or his assistant, after many a considerate glance at his preparations, to see that all is right, goes to the ladies' cabin, and announces breakfast—an announcement which is generally followed by their appearance. They take their places at the upper end of the table, and then, and not till then, the bell gives notice that individuals of the rougher sex may seat themselves. The meal I leave to your lively imagination to picture. I have noted its chief characteristic. You might imagine that the beings engaged in it were for the time, part of the engine, which is sighing and working underneath at the rate of one hundred strokes in the minute, so little does their occupation admit of interruption. There is little or no conversation, excepting of the monosyllabic and ejaculatory kind which is absolutely necessary; and instead of the social hour, during which in other lands, the feast of the body is often found to be compatible with the feast of the soul,—you spend, in fact, an uneasy ten minutes, in which the necessary act of eating is certainly stript of all the graces under which supercultivation contrives to shroud its sensuality, and is reduced to the plain homely realities of bestial feeding. Woe to the poor gentleman of habitually slow and careful mastication—he who was taught to 'denticate, masticate, champ, chew, and swallow!'—Woe to the man of invariable habits—he whose conversational powers are the greatest during repast—the proser—the sentimental bon-vivant who loves to eat and think—or the gentleman with stiff jaw-bones and slow deglutition! Woe to the epicure, whose eye might well else dilate at the sight of the well-covered board, and its crowd of western delicacies. Woe to the hungry gallant, whose chivalry cannot suffer him to enjoy a morsel till he has seen the ladies well-served and attended through the meal. Small credit gets the good-natured soul who deftly carves for all, and ever carves in vain. There is no quarter given. Many of the males will leave the table the moment they are satisfied—the ladies leave it as soon as they well can;—and then in come the bar-keepers, engineers, carpenter, pilot, and inferior officers of the boat: the table again groans with its load of plenty, and is again stripped and forsaken, to be a third time the scene of feasting for the black steward and coloured servants of both sexes. During these latter scenes of the same act of the same play, I need hardly press you to quit the cabin for the seats on the boiler-deck, or, still better, for the hurricane-deck above.

In fine warm weather, more especially during your first voyage in the West, both curiosity and comfort will lead you to spend by far the greater part of your time in the open air; where the gentle breeze, freshened by the rapid motion of the boat, and the magical manner in which scenes rise and disappear, will always cheer you, while with conversation and reading you while away the monotonous hours of a long morning. Should the boat be one of the first class for power, well commanded and carefully engineered, and the season fine, few situations could be named of an equally exciting character. It is possible that you may meet with a few well-bred, intelligent travellers—that you may be both in good health and good-humour—that the general run of the voyage may be prosperous and without accidents or detention. The steam-boat may have an engine which works smoothly and without jarring, so that the use of your pen may be easy; you may have contrived to keep a few books in your travelling equipage;—the cabin may be fully adequate to the comfortable accommodation of those having a claim to its use. Above all, favourable circumstances may have given you friends in the ladies' cabin; by occasional visits to whom at proper seasons, you may please and be pleased. If so, well and good—but you may chance to fare otherwise, and for the sake of illustration we will suppose that the very contrary is the case in almost every particular; that heated in body and mind by confinement and disappointment, you are peevish as a pea-hen; that the society is decidedly ill-bred and vicious—that the boat jars so with every stroke of the piston that you cannot write a line—further that you have no books—the cabin is crowded—the machinery wants constant repair—the boilers want scraping. This hour you get upon a sand-bank, the next you are nearly snagged—drift-wood in the river breaks your paddles—the pilot is found to be a toper,—the engineer an ignoramus,—the steward an economist—the captain a gambler—the black fire-men insurgent, and the deck passengers riotous. This moment you have too little steam, and hardly advance against the current; another, too much, and the boat trembles with the tremendous force exerted by the power that impels her. To complete your dismay, the captain agrees to take a disabled steam-boat, or a couple of heavily-laden barges, in tow, for the next four or five hundred miles. Instead of accomplished females, such as at another time you might have as fellow-passengers, we will suppose the ladies' cabin to be tenanted by a few grotesque, shy, uninteresting beings, never seen but when marshalled in by the steward to their silent and hurried repast, and never heard, but, when shut up in their own apartment, a few sounds occasionally escape through the orifice of the stove-pipe, making up in strength for what they want in sweetness.

What are you to do in such cases? You may lounge in the anti-chamber, and watch the progress of stimulating at the bar—you may re-enter the cabin and strive to get possession of a chair and a gleam from the store; or you may ascend to a small apartment found in some steam-boats, called Social Hall, in other words a den of sharpers and blacklegs, where from morning to night the dirty pack of cards are passed from hand to hand. For the rest, you may study human nature in many forms, and one thing will not fail to strike you, and that is the marvellous rapidity with which the meals follow, and the world of important preparation which passes before your eyes for an end so little worthy of it.

The time occupied by the supple-limbed black boys, Proteus and William, in drawing out the long table, laying the cloth, and other preliminary preparations, will not be far short of an hour; while a quarter of that time suffices for the demolition of the various courses,—the whole meal, as already described, consisting of a shove to the table, a scramble, and a shove from the table. Things are cleared away, and the sliding table pushed together again; William and Proteus placing themselves at either end, twenty feet apart, and straining with might and main till the ends meet. You take a dozen turns across the floor,—you read a little, write a little, yawn a little—when before you could have believed it possible, the steward's myrmidons, with looks of infinite importance, enter again—seize on the two ends of the table, strain them once more asunder, and the work of preparation recommences.

The mass of the society met with upon the Western boats is, as far as a transient traveller may be allowed to plead his individual experience, to be designated by the single term, bad. It is one thing to deny the truth of a statement in which I believe most travellers, of any pretentions to education and moral feeling agree, whether they be from the Eastern or Midland States, or from Europe; and another to find palliative reasons why it cannot be otherwise for the present. A man may make up his mind to glance good-humouredly around him, and to look upon the unwonted society into which he is here introduced, with equanimity, studying neither to give nor take offence; but nothing can make him believe that what appears before him as absolute vice, is, in fact, virtue in disguise,—or that consummate vulgarity is, in fact, anything else. My impression was, that in these boats we came in contact with much of the scum of the population, and in judging them to be such, I was far from believing that they were a fair sample of the people of the West generally. On the contrary, it was not the uncouth and uncultivated, but honest bearing, of the people 'belonging to the river,' which was offensive,—rusticity and vulgarity are far from being synonymous terms—nor that of the young Kentuckian, noisy and intemperate as he might be, stunning your ears with an amusing and fanciful lingo, which, however some who should know better may attempt to dignify and perpetuate, is, after all, nothing but slang. The decidedly worst company was I found invariably made up of those who should, considering their pretensions to education, public employment, or the sober lives and civilization of the stock from which they came, have known better. And to this class belong many of the Americans, who travel on business connected with commercial houses in the large or smaller towns. They are as busy as wasps in a sugar-cask, as long as they are about their business, and the most listless of human beings when not so employed. They have apparently no thought, no reading, no information, no speculation but about their gains—dollar is the word most frequently in their mouths, and judging from them and their numbers, the proportion of men with money and without manners would appear to be greater in this part of the globe than elsewhere.

There is one operation connected with your daily progress, which may be signalized, as it affords some variety, and breaks the monotony of your proceedings. This is wooding, or the hour's halt at one of the innumerable farms or wood-yards, for the purpose of laying in the necessary stock of fuel; the quantity of which that is burned in the course of twenty-four hours on board a steam boat of four or five hundred tons, is almost incredible.

This halt generally takes place twice a day, morning and evening, when the whole of the bow of the boat, and on either side of the furnaces, is covered with regular piles. Besides the opportunity thus afforded of going ashore, the scene is always a busy and lively one, as in addition to the crew being engaged in it, the major part of the deck passengers lend a hand, in consideration of a reduction in the passage money, which it is to the advantage of the proprietors to make as this procedure is productive of a great saving of time. During the night, immense fires are kept blazing at the wood-yards, to direct the boats where to find them, and the scene then presented in wooding is highly wild and picturesque.

Among the beings attached to a Western steamer, there is one class too remarkable to be passed by, and this is composed of the fire-men, the sphere of whose labour is directly on the bow of the boat, upon which the long row of gaping furnaces open. They are almost invariably athletic negroes, or mulattoes. The labour, which would be considered pretty severe by all but themselves, is generally performed amid bursts of boisterous merriment, jests, and songs; and the peculiar character of the latter has often made me hang over the boiler-deck railing to listen; particularly after dark, when the scene was very striking from the bright ruddy glare thrown upon and around them, while with a thousand grimaces they grasped the logs and whirled them into the blazing throat of the furnaces. Their ordinary song might strictly be said to be divided into a rapid alternation of recitative and chorus—the solo singer uttering his part with great volubility and alertness, while the mass instantly fell in with the burden, which consisted merely of a few words and notes in strictly harmonious unison.

As usual we were not without our quantum of Kentucky boatmen and backwoodsmen on board, that race whose portrait sketched by himself as 'half horse, half alligator, with a dash of the steam-boat,' and filled up by the wondering and awe-struck travellers from the Old World, has been so often the subject of mirth and obloquy. I fear the genuine breed is getting rather scarce; at least, though I saw many boisterous doings, and many an amusing specimen of rough manners, I never saw any one stabbed or gouged. Take, however, the portrait of the extraordinary 'Kentucky Swell,' who was our fellow-passenger for a day or two in the Cavalier. He came up with the boat from New Orleans, accompanied by his father, a fine, hale, sensible old man, clad in a suit of home-spun from the loom of his wife and daughters. He had perhaps also been a 'swell' in his youth, but all had sobered down into an independent, staid demeanour. Every word he spoke was full of good, sound, sense—that kind which age and experience can alone produce; and my slight intercourse with him added to the respect which I feel to those of his class, in whom generous feeling, sound practical sense, and shrewd judgment, are often found united with unassuming manners and simple-heartedness. His maxim, the wisdom of which he upheld, after bringing up a fine family of sons, was—'I give my boys seven years' play, seven years' labour, and seven years' instruction;' and though his youngest, whose figure will be before you anon, evidently showed that a few years more must pass, before all the good fruits of this system were fully developed, I am not at all inclined to dispute it.

They were returning from New Orleans to their plantation. The dress of the parent I have alluded to. That of the son bore no resemblance to it. He was strong and well-built, having what is rather a rarity in the West, shoulders of a breadth proportionate to his height. His countenance, which was good, with a bold aquiline nose, bore a strong resemblance to that of his parent, though it was for the present destitute of the expression of good sense and honest-heartedness by which the latter was eminently distinguished. His whole dress and manner were peculiar. A coat of strong blue cloth of the Jehu cut, with white bone buttons of the Jehu size, the standing collar of which was always pulled up over the ears, and concealed them beneath its shade, served at the same time, in consequence of its being tightly buttoned from throat to waist, to hide the neck-cloth and waistcoat, of the existence of neither of which am I therefore able to make affidavit. This upper garment, which was certainly typical of the horse part of his nature, impended over a pair of full corduroy pantaloons. The legs of the same, though constructed by the artist of amplitude sufficient to reach the ancle if they had been allowed to do so, having apparently been elevated to mid-leg in the act of drawing on a pair of half-boots, remained hitched on the top of the latter during the whole of the first day of my observations, no effort having been made to induce them to descend to the ordinary position. On the second, one descended and the other did not, and in this way Tom Lavender sported his Nimrod-looking person. I never saw his hands; as whether sitting, standing, or walking, they were always thrust decidedly to the bottom of the large flap pockets of his Jehu coat.

In the manner in which he disposed his person in the cabin, when inactive, upon two or three chairs, basking before the fire, with his nose erect in the air, I thought I detected something of the alligator part of his origin; while in the impetuous manner in which, striding forward with outstretched limbs, he perambulated the cabin or the deck to take exercise, alternately inflating his cheeks, and blowing forth the accumulated air, I could not fail to detect the steamboat, by which the purity of the race had been recently crossed. He was a man of no conversation, but he made up for it by an incessant hoarse laugh, filling up the pauses in that of three or four trusty young cronies, who seemed to hold him in great respect and consideration. I should not forget to mention that at a later period I was informed that the mode of wearing the pantaloons hoisted half-leg high as described above, was premeditated, and intended to give an '*air distingué!*'

About noon on the second day, the steam-boat was directed to the right hand, or Kentucky shore, at a point where the forest appeared cleared from the bank for many hundred yards in front, and the long line of fencing peered over the edge, denoting a large and extensive clearing. As we approached the landing-place, I noticed a little group gathering at the corner of a pile of cut wood, ranged on the high bank above. Over the landing place, inclined a single sycamore, supported by his main, perpendicular root over the river, with all his leafless branches surrounded by the sweeping folds of a gigantic grape-vine. A fine handsome man stood in advance, and upon our mooring, came slowly down towards the boat. His resemblance to the old man on board was too striking to leave us in doubt as to his relationship to the parties I have described, being that of an elder son and brother. Our companions had then reached their home. While a knot of negroes and coloured men descended to the boat, with their teeth displayed in the broad grin of welcome, and laid officious hands upon the pile of baggage which lay on the boiler-deck in readiness, I noticed the wife and daughter of the good old man, half-sheltered by the woodstack, standing coyly in the rear, till the whole group had ascended the bank, when they all proceeded in joy and contentment to the house. The dwelling was situated a few hundred paces in the rear—good and substantial, with an open compartment in the centre, such as I have described elsewhere. I got a glimpse of it by following the party up the bank, for to tell the truth, the meeting was both a pleasant one to see, and one calculated to make travellers like ourselves, thousands of miles from our native countries, feel a little homesick ; and, notwithstanding the amusement I had extracted from the 'Swell,' I could have found it in my heart to envy him the snug home and warm welcome which we saw him receive.

But I must draw to a conclusion. Through God's good providence, we escaped dangers and difficulties of every kind,—and there were many encountered before we reached Wheeling, just as the river was filling with ice. There we took a stage, and proceeded over the Alleghany into Maryland. We arrived early on Christmas-day, within a few miles of what was to be the termination of a very long and singular ramble: when we got unexpectedly overturned in descending the Catoctin mountain, into a deep ditch; and though we all escaped with limbs and lives, I got a sounder blow on the head than ever fell to my lot before;—which was all very well; as it made me, perhaps, think more seriously than I should else have done, of the many dangers which the hand of God had led us through, in peace, health, and safety.

LETTER XIX.

It was but the other day I was in company with a gentlemanly foreigner—a Prussian; acute, reasonable, and polite, travelling for his instruction and amusement, to see with his own eyes, and to hear with his own ears. The conversation turned upon the difference of the criminal law in our respective countries, and the mode of procedure in criminal cases. Two things had struck him with reference to that of England; first, the weight which we gave to mere circumstantial evidence, in the absence of positive proof; and secondly, the horrible severity of our code, and the administration of it. He stated he had been seated for hours in the court of sessions in one of our Southern cities, and that out of twenty or thirty cases under consideration, not a single prisoner was acquitted. He was quite horrified! Accusation and conviction seemed to go hand-in-hand. The time occupied in any one case was, as he stated, quite insufficient for patient investigation; but his blood curdled as he heard—Guilty! Guilty! Guilty! pronounced again and again by the foreman of the jury, before he had had time to make himself master of the bare accusation.

The idea fixed, by the evidence of his own senses on his mind, was this;—that, in England, every man who was accused, must be, and was condemned. And I wish you could have seen how wide he opened his eyes, when he was forced unwillingly to relinquish his belief by a calm explanation of the series of preparatory steps through which every individual case had passed, before it had come to the point where he had seen it arrive, for positive decision. Of the examination before a magistrate, the reconsideration of cases by a grand jury, he of course had, till now, no opportunity of hearing; but he was brought to confess after a while, that, all things considered, it was hardly to be conceived that innocence, if innocence there were, would not have been made evident in the previous stages of inquiry, and that nothing but uncontrovertible evidence of guilt could be received and made the cause of condemnation.

However, something was to be learned from this, and I trust I was not myself above profitting by the lesson, which many years of travel have assisted in impressing upon my mind; namely, that a stranger in a strange land sees with strange and partial eyes, and that the difficulty of forming a correct judgment, even with close observation, and without any disposition to distort facts, is far greater than might be supposed.

Much has been said by Americans of the temper and manners of English travellers among them, and there is hardly a book published hitherto, bearing upon their social and political state, which has not been followed by a host of angry criticisms in the periodicals from Maine to Georgia. I grant it, they have had much to complain of, and considering all things, the chuckle of gratification which agitated the people of the Union, when lately, his Transparency Prince Pucklar Muskau, first drank our wine and then wrote a libel on us, was such as might be sympathized with.

Their visitors are accused, and it must be allowed frequently with justice, of coming with minds influenced by prejudice, and carrying away, perhaps, an honest, but certainly an unlucky bundle of false estimates, false impressions, and false conclusions. Might it not be admitted, that travellers from both sides of the Atlantic have hitherto been, with but rare exceptions, of minds and characters little calculated to carry back to their own land just notions of the countries they have been pleased to visit, and further pleased to write about.

It is to be lamented, that at the present day, when travelling forms, as it were, not only part of the education of a gentleman in our own country—the main recreation of thousands of those who have the means in the middle classes, and almost the business of hundreds,—that so few understand anything of the philosophy of travel. How few show, by their mode of passing through a foreign country, and their occupations and temper, that they are actuated by the nobler ends attainable by the survey of other countries than their own; and for one who will show by his conversations and writings, on his return home, that his mind and views have been participants in that expansion which his range of travel has procured for his natural observation,—how many come back with confirmed prejudices and narrowed souls!

And with regard to Great Britain and the United States of America, but little has been done hitherto by the travellers from either side of the Atlantic, to do away with that dust of angry passion and prejudice which filled and blinded the eyes of our fathers, both before and after the struggle which burst the ties which till then existed between them. Still, though family quarrels are said, and perhaps with reason, to be of a more bitter nature than any other, it is surely time that between the inhabitants of the British Isles and those of the opposite shores of America,—speaking the same language; claiming the same literature; the same early history; both possessing the same ardent love of liberty, though the one may incline to the monarchical, and the other to the democratic form of government,—worshipping God after the same manner; each containing thousands of real Christians, united together as brethren by the closest bonds of the Gospel, with common hopes, desires, and ends in living;—and the one receiving yearly accessions of thousands from the shores of the other—should cease to deem one another natural enemies.

I am among those whose personal experience inclines me to believe that the impulse in America in particular, is towards a renewal of confidence, and the return of kindly feeling towards the country from which they have taken the broader features of their constitutions and character, and whose blood was the blood of their fathers; and this in spite of the irritation kept up by the press on either side. Yet how little have travellers, either American or English, done hitherto to foster this natural feeling.

Of the English travellers more anon;—in the mean time I would ask, were I at the elbow of one of my friends beyond the water, who might join the general voice of his countrymen in condemning our injustice and illiberality,—whether as Europeans, and more, as Englishmen, our position, political, moral and domestic, had been subjected to examination of eyes and minds less clouded by self-love, prejudice, and ignorance? I grant the over-weening love of John Bull for his country, (may it never diminish!)—his sober contempt for all others—his excess of prejudice, —the ignorance which he will frequently expose as to the real situation of another country;—yet is Brother Jonathan less prejudiced and less ignorant? To judge their words by works of the Americans, are they more disposed to hear good of England than we of America? Are their hacknied and senseless tirades against our monarchical form of government and aristocracy more just, than ours against their democracy? From whom is the citizen of the United States to get his knowledge of the true state of society, political or moral, in England? From the disaffected who come over to him? From the radical or democratic prints which are the favourites, and from which most of the information given to the American public is culled? From the novels of the present day, reprinted and spread through America from East to West with such haste and avidity,—the feverish out-pourings of the flimsy philosophers and would be 'master-spirits' of the age, which are given forth to a gaping public as true portraitures of the manners and morals of the 'best society?' Is America to judge of the Old World from the testimony of her own citizen-travellers? Of these my limited observation has shown me three classes; besides the young merchant who takes a short run while his vessel lies in port, and comes back with the credit of having travelled in Europe.

The first is the most numerous, and consists of young men having the wealth at command, who either from curiosity, or for the sake of doing as others have done, or for the sake of learning the European languages, pass a few years in travel. They visit France—breakfast at the cafés—dine at the restaurans—linger in Paris and taste its follies, till health and funds begin to fail—they run off to Italy, and scour back by Switzerland and the Rhine, taking England on their way home. In the latter country they sneer at everything, see no society beyond the bagmen and the roué at the hotels:—a dinner at their merchant's, the topmost round of their ladder. They grumble at their consuls and ambassadors for not showing them more respect, and not dancing attendance upon them—they go out in a fuss and come back in a fume. At home they boast of having travelled,—having dined at Abellard's, supped at Bery's,—intrigued with some hanger-on at the operas or theatres, and sported a Stultz. Their republicanism has been preserved undiluted, or even been concentrated by the feeling that Europe had no grade of society where they could feel quite at home. They do no credit to their own country, and are little capable of communicating just notions of Europe or European society; while unfortunately these are the very men from whom the popular idea of American gentlemen has been taken.

The second class are those who come to Europe with a disposition and the means to enjoy European life and luxury. They return in a few years unfortunately spoilt for their own country. They complain of ennui—want of excitement. Dazzled by the false glare of society in Europe, without the talent which would teach them to look beyond it, and form an accurate judgment of its peculiar advantages, they have become blind to the charms of their own country, and its claims upon their love and duty. The healthy, but less polished society of the United States is tasteless to them. The simplicity and matter-of-fact qualities of their countrymen become odious. They only breed and receive disgust, and by showing how little they have gained from European travel, they strengthen prejudice in the minds of their fellow-citizens.

The third class, hitherto a very small one, but I know it to be increasing—equally distinct from the republican flippancy of the first and the mawkish pretence to super-cultivation of the second. The individuals composing this class have not only the means, but they have the minds that fit them for travel. Education has sown seeds which the latter matures. They step upon the shores of Europe with bosoms filled with eager and natural enthusiasm, and upon that of England with a feeling, which, if it cannot be called love, is at least veneration. They may pass years abroad, revelling in classic, historic, and poetic association; visiting many climes; peeping into many degrees of society, the highest and the lowest;—looking calmly at men and things;—and learning that God has not averted his face from the Old World, because he has turned it on the New. They may form many ties; and linger till it might be prophesied, that, flattered, caressed, and accustomed to the excitement and luxury of Europe, their thoughts and hopes were weaned from America; and yet such will return with panting bosoms to their own land,—their eyes will glisten so as they have not glistened for years at the sight of their own verdant shores,—and they calmly sit down in the bosom of society, and show, by every word and action, that their birthright and home have never been relinquished. The excitement of Europe has passed away;—but they find sufficient in the return to early scenes,—the faces of ancient friends,—the marvels which an absentee for a few years must discover in this land of promise, and in the glorious prospects for the future, sufficient to fill both head and heart. Having brought away a just conception of

Europe, and of its deficiencies or advantages, they may be supposed to have formed a just estimate of America; and having been temperate in their use of the luxuries of the former, their palate is not so depraved that they cannot enjoy the more simple advantages of the latter. They were an honour to their country abroad, they are calculated to be an honour to her on their return, and wherever the influence of their temper of mind is felt, society will be essentially benefited.

Such examples, and I could name many among those whom I esteem as friends,—make you not only honour the individuals themselves, but the country they call their home.

With regard to English travellers in the United States, do not imagine that I am without a list of them also, which I shall forthwith find and lay before you, leaving you to detect that to which I may be supposed to belong. Though our countrymen are found by swarms upon the teeming roads of France, Switzerland and Italy; here, their appearance is rarer and therefore more marked. I mention first, the Porcine English Traveller, as personifying in the eyes of Brother Jonathan the identical John Bull. A few of this class are met with on the steam-boats and rail-roads, and a straggler or two in the interior of the country, marching onward to the music of their own dissatisfied grumbling, like a bear with a sore head. They are seldom long visitants. They arrive from England on a hurried tour, sometimes accompanied by a companion in training, one of those who travel over the world with their eyes shut and mouths open. They are sure to be disgusted with the United States—where they have neither room nor time to do anything. They complain of crowded steam-boats—crowded hotels and boarding-houses—crowded carriages—of the sharpness of people's elbows—the quickly satisfied appetites and the unrestrained gaze of all—the impertinent inquiries of a few. They see nothing but want of polish, want of taste, and want of politeness. They ask how many of the States are included in the term Christendom. They rush from New York to Saratoga—from Saratoga to Niagara—thence to Detroit; and then, in utter disgust, determine to quit the land of equality, and in a paroxysm of loyalty and rekindled Toryism, get themselves set ashore in Upper Canada; little dreaming, that the back woods, whether of Canada or the United States, are alike devoid of convenience; and that every new country, whether under democratic or monarchical rule, presents pretty much the same phases of society and the same natural features. We met with such an one;—a decent gentleman, but in a paroxysm of despair, not knowing how to extricate himself from a position into which a crudely-conceived desire of travel had beguiled him. We had advantages over him in every way as old travellers—laughing at a certain degree of privation—and our commiseration was, I own, mingled with a good deal of amusement, the more as his case was in no way a desperate one: but his complaints of the people, and the roads, and the fare, and the morals, were unceasing. After having been squeezed in a narrow waggon with others during a whole day's journey, and hardly allowed time to eat the unwonted food set before him—he had been compelled to sleep, as all must in such a country, in a cluster of log-huts, half open to the air. He had, from his description, out of compliment, (I never had such a piece of good fortune), been permitted to occupy a small compartment by himself; and after describing the bad accommodations, he went on to say, with a very slow mysterious intonation, as though communicating a horrible incident: 'and sir, will you believe it, I found that in the end I had to sleep with two ladies inside of me!' Now, stout as the gentleman was, by this he meant nothing, but that two ladies, travellers like himself, had had to retire to a compartment beyond his own. This, however, was to him the acme of barbarism. What good can be the result of such a traveller's lucubrations?

But to go on with my list. You see here the Speculator, the Theorist, and the Utilitarian; often men, who, unable to take care of their own individual affairs, begin to feel great anxiety for those of mankind in general,—as you may have seen in days gone by, a tipsy gentleman, when just upon the point of losing his reason, begin to hold forth in a strain of maudlin philanthropy about his neighbours, and sigh deeply for the welfare of the whole human race; crowning his folly, by offering his services to conduct an equally tipsy companion home. Such men frequently make their appearance in America; disappointed and indigent; having lost character in their own country, and full of a new-born fervour in favour of a land and a people of which they know nothing. Their indignation at having divulged their theories in the former to deaf ears, will only be equalled by their surprise in finding that of all countries in the world, the United States contains the greatest number of matter-of-fact men; and that neither admiration nor support will be granted to crude and untried notions. And, like the demagogue, the free-thinker in politics and religion, and many a one who leaves his country in high dudgeon, after long tampering with petty treason,—men of this class frequently alter their opinions and language after their arrival here, as they find a sobriety of demeanour and sentiment in the people, which ill accords with their views; and then they abuse the country with just as much reason as they lauded it before. But what good is to be expected from these, or their reports, on either side of the Atlantic?

Next comes the hasty traveller,—the young officer on furlough,—the young gentleman on his return home from the West India Islands, who lands at New York, determines to take advantage of the packet to Liverpool on the first of the succeeding month, say a fortnight hence,—and in the meantime to visit the most interesting points of the United States and Canada.

He flies to Niagara by the canal or the road; then takes the line of Ontario steamboats, descends the Saint Lawrence to Montreal, perhaps visits Quebec, returns panting by way of Champlain and Lake George, to the Hudson, and thus to his port in the very nick of time. Something he has seen, but can carry away no very definite notion of the people, or the state of the country.

Another class—the prejudiced and pompous traveller, travelling as he says, for information, but seeing every thing through a bilious medium, and neither pleasing himself nor others. In the cities he will grumble at the hotels; he will say that Bunkers and the City Hotel in New York are odious; that Gadsby's at Washington is a bear-garden,—in which by the way he will not be far from the truth, particularly during the meeting of Congress,—and that of all the sojourning places for the traveller in the Union, the Tremont at Boston is the only one that is not offensive to a degree. In the country he will be horrified by the number of badly-made coats he may see, forgetful that at least he meets with no beggars, and sees no marks of penury and want. With a mind morbidly inquisitive, he will wish to persuade himself that he understands the true colours of everything, at the same time he looks at all through a piece of smoked glass. In his observations upon the politics and government of the country, he is totally at fault, not having taken care to draw the distinction between the operations of the General Government, and those of the separate

State Governments: and in his observations upon society, he will be equally far from just, because he makes his own education, breeding, and feelings, the standard of comparison, and what he does not or cannot understand, must be wrong. The very absence of beggars will be to him a proof of a low degree of civilization. He will condemn the Americans for not every where showing that cultivation to which he may have supposed we have attained, being perhaps of too lofty a temper to reflect, that some of the points appertaining to the decencies or elegancies of life, upon which he dilates with the most cutting and supercilious sarcasm, are precisely those, to an acquaintance with which, we ourselves, as a nation have been but very recently introduced, and whose general adoption dates from a yet later period. An Englishman of this cast will be thunderstruck, nay, petrified, at hearing the oft-reiterated assertion, that English is spoken better in America than in the mother country, and with some reason, as nothing but his own observation and reflection will show him what foundation can possibly exist for such an assumption.

If he stays long enough in the country, and travels sufficiently, he will grant that throughout America, he will generally hear English pronounced, he may readily understand it. Further, that the dialects which prevail in many of our counties do not exist, though in some parts of the Eastern states, a language very much approaching to a dialect is spoken;—for the rest, he will find that though as far as the general pronunciation of the language goes, all may be at least intelligible, there will be a great deal which an Englishman can hardly be expected to understand: that slang, quite as incomprehensible to him as the gipsy lingo of our own hedge-sides, forms the common mode of communication in some parts of the country; and that, generally speaking, there are few ranks of society in which a certain degree of this base coin is not current. He will find from the style of conversation of Americans of literary turn, that out of the main cities and in remote parts of the country, it is evident that the difference between written and conversational language is scarcely understood,—which may arise from the speakers having to draw their language more from books than from the interchange of ideas with men of their own stamp; and that consequently the use of big and pompous words, such as load the newspaper paragraphs, is much more common than good taste would admit. But enough of the pompous traveller. He may do very little harm, but he will do no great good.

You may further meet here with the sentimental traveller, who having read Rousseau and Chateaubriand, and become enamoured of the image of man in a state of nature, unsophisticated and unspoiled by civilization, or of some sweet picture of savage life, dives his way through the forests to the Indian settlements, to find an amiable '*Chactas,*' or still more amiable '*Atala.*' 'Tis a bootless errand! The bland traveller also, good-natured to excess, losing half his time in asking questions of those who cannot answer them, and running right and left to see common places;—the book-maker, he who comes with the purpose of writing a book which shall contradict one in the market:—the inquisitive gentleman, a bore, and bored in turn. Then one or two travellers who having long and hotly advocated some change in our political or ecclesiastical government, come here at last, to do what should have been done first—namely, to see how it works. What can you expect but ex-parte statements from such people? They are like geological theorists, who having concocted their system in their library chair, come forth and make a tour, in which they would refer all the phenomena which come in their way to the test of their own petty conception.

And now I fancy I hear you ask, and to what order of English travellers in America did you belong? The Porcine? No. The speculator, theorist, or demagogue? Neither the one nor the other. The hasty traveller? Not altogether. The prejudiced and pompous? I trust not. The sentimental? Decidedly not.

Then you travelled as a Cosmopolitan?—No. I dislike the word. I love, and prefer, and uphold the political, social, moral, and religious superiority of my own native country too sincerely, to claim the title of 'a citizen of the world,' if by that term you mean one who is equally at home and without preferences wherever he wanders over its broad surface; but if by it you would designate one, who reconciles himself easily for a time to change of place and scene;—one whose impulse is rather to sing with the native of a foreign land, than to quarrel with him; to see good every where rather than evil;—one with a disposition to form ties with the natives of every clime, and enter into their usages and feelings not only with charity but with pleasure, so long as they are not forbidden by his Bible, and by the sense of right and wrong which sound education and good examples may have given him—so far I am a Cosmopolitan, and as such I visited America.

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AUTHOR OF THE 'ALPENSTOCK,' ETC.

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LETTER I.

To F. B. L.

We will now change the scene and the season. The remainder of the winter of 1832-33,—for the prolongation of the tour of which I have assuredly given you sufficient details, had cut a month off that season,—was spent most agreeably in New York and Baltimore, with an occasional visit to Washington and Philadelphia. I might here appropriately hazard a few observations with reference to the chief characteristics of that society to which we had been introduced at our first visit, and had now a better opportunity of becoming acquainted with; but I defer them till a brighter day.

You are aware, that notwithstanding their more southerly degree of latitude, these parts of the United States are often visited by winterly weather, of a severity to which we are almost strangers in our island; and such was the case in the commencement of the year in question, when, after an open and pleasant January and February, the month of March was signalized by ten days of such Siberian cold, that the country far into Virginia was covered with deep snow; and the intercourse between the great cities for some days totally interrupted, by the quantity of ice in the Delaware and Chesapeake, and the obstruction of the long lines of rail-road over the peninsulas.

It had long been the intention of Count Pourtales and myself to make a tour in the Southern States early in the year, and as soon as the weather grew milder, we met together in Baltimore for this purpose.

The Spring, which seemed to have been ready to descend on the earth at the close of the foregoing month, but had been rudely arrested on the threshold, now gave renewed tokens of approach.

My early predilections for this season above all others have suffered no abatement; and few can imagine the degree of pleasure with which I now regarded its approaching steps. In the present instance it came, as might be expected, with accelerated speed the moment that the mild south wind had thawed the surface of the frozen land and water. While the ground was yet swimming with superabundant moisture, my old friends the frogs began piping away; but a few days of dry sunny weather effected a complete change in the scene; and, as we strolled over the woodland country in the vicinity of Baltimore, we saw that the spell was broken, and the imprisoned beauty of the year loosed from its chains.

It was delightful to feel the warm sun—ten thousand motes floating in its beam!—and the gentle air, fanning the meadows, and exciting little eddying whirlwinds in the forest: to hear birds chirping and walking about over the rustling carpet of dried leaves;—to see the lady-birds emerging from their winter hiding-places at the foot of the trees;—the groups of guinea-fowl straying over the fields of young wheat, or pecking the decayed acorns under the trees;—and to note the stirred surface of the ground ready to burst with the rich mass of embryo vegetation beneath. The grey squirrel awoke from his quiet sleep in the hollow tree, and began his life of careless gambol; and the mottled ground-squirrel might be seen with his mate, venturing from his nest among the twisted roots. Here and there in sheltered situations the *Draba*, *Lamium*, and *Stellaria*, were detected, as in the Old World,—the first to greet the eye of the lover of nature: and now, full of expectation, we turned our faces southward to meet the Spring.

A Steamer, swift, spacious, and powerful—more like a frigate in dimensions than a boat, was our chosen mode of conveyance to Norfolk in Virginia. We answered the farewell of our friends on the wharf, —whirled round with our head to the bright morning sun,—dashed swiftly over the lively surface of the inner basin,—shot like an arrow in concert with two other noble steam-boats, through the narrow outlet, where the bay appears shut in by two advancing points of and,

and leaving Fort M'Henry to the right, bore away through the estuary of the Patapsco, towards the broad Chesapeake. After the lapse of half an hour the city began to fade away in the distance, though the majestic column of white marble which records the grateful remembrance of the people to the best general and best man America ever produced, continued long visible from its distinguished colour and commanding position. While our rivals bore away towards North Point, at the upper extremity of the bay of the Patapsco, we held a more southerly course towards the southern point of land; and in an hour's time were steering directly down the Chesapeake. Anon, we shot past the opening of Severn river, and descried the domes of Annapolis, the seat of the State Legislature, at the extremity. One long low headland or line of coast after the other, appeared in sight on the right or left and vanished, as hour after hour the splendid boat kept her even course through that expanded and expanding bay, which surely ranks as the noblest in the world.

The early morning of the second day found us at Norfolk, and the evening at Richmond, the beautiful capital of the 'Old Dominion.' The ascent of James River was interesting, though the scenery is rarely of a bold character. The features of the country were novel to us in many respects. As might be expected in the vicinity of these early settlements of the English, there were many things to remind us of the tastes and manners of the 'old country' some hundred years ago. On many of the plantations you see fine, old, aristocratical-looking mansions, built in the French or English styles, situated at a convenient distance from the banks of the river and from 'the quarter' occupied by the slaves—some of them tall and stately, with staring facades, and a pair of wings, looking as if they were about to fly down the river; others, like French chateaux, with terraces in front, backed by stiff clumps of trees.

Above City Point, where the Appomatox enters, the river narrows, and winds in very short serpentine curves, among low rocky hills.

One feature of the landscape observable throughout lower Virginia, consists in the incredible number of brick chimneys with the fire-place attached, which stand on the wasted and impoverished lands, the wooden houses to which they belonged having totally disappeared. A stranger is disposed to ask, is this a sign of prosperity or adversity—have the inhabitants lost or bettered their fortunes?

The position of Richmond is celebrated, and worthily so, as both striking and delightful; but it is not my design to detain you here. We pursued our journey southward by the public stages, and found both the roads, the vehicles, and every arrangement in connection with them, very inferior to those of the North and East. A bad omen accompanied our first resumption of stage-travelling this year, for as we had wound up our autumnal tour by an overthrow, such was again our fate at the very outset of this!

Compelled by necessity we had taken our seats in a ricketty vehicle, broad at top and narrow in the wheels; overloaded to excess with nine adult inside passengers, besides children, abundance of baggage, and the mail bags for the south and south-western States of the Union, which were truly in themselves more than a load. There were many prognostics and signs of overturn from the very first moment of our departure from Richmond. However, twenty miles had been passed over in safety, when we arrived at the brink of a steep acclivity, going down to the Appomatox, and in sight of Petersburg, the termination of this perilous division of our journey: when a fore wheel broke and an instant overturn followed, at the edge of a fearful chasm. Both Pourtales and myself came off scathless, much to our surprise and thankfulness; but others had toes, ribs, and noses damaged, and one poor fellow a fearful wound in the forehead.

Misfortunes never come single; for in the course of the ensuing night, while pursuing our route towards the borders of North Carolina, we were overtaken by a violent snow storm, and, sticking fast in the middle of the forest for two or three hours, had to confess, while we laughed at our ridiculous position, that we were never more disappointed in our lives. But morning dawns on the darkest night, and the most unpleasant journey comes to an end. After twenty-four hours' further advance amidst forests whose evergreen foliage was loaded with snow, we began to emerge from them into a more open country, and more genial climate, and the sweet spring, which seemed to have been again fairly strangled in birth, broke on us anew. In fine, having reached the country to the south of Fayetteville, in North Carolina, you will find I shall have no more mention to make of winter for some letters to come.

I have alluded, a few lines back, to the signs and tokens of coming spring in the vicinity of Baltimore; they were indeed cheering, but few in comparison to the number and singular beauty of those which now teemed on all sides of us;—and fatigued as we were with incessant travel for four days and nights from Richmond to Charleston, our attention was ever on the alert, as hour after hour our southerly course brought some new and striking appearance in the animal or vegetable world, peculiar to the season and climate, within our notice. In the vicinity of the river Pedee, within the boundaries of South Carolina, many of the forests and jungles presented a scene of peculiar beauty from the richness of the colouring thrown over the grey labyrinth of branches by the bursting buds and flowers, which in numerous instances preceded the appearance of the leaves in the deciduous trees and shrubs. The dark and sombre verdure of the sweet-bay, magnolia, tie-bush and other evergreens of the southern forest, which a few days before were unrelieved by any lively hues, were now contrasted with the most brilliant colours.

There were the leafless boughs of the Sassafras, covered with bright clusters of yellow flowers; the dog-wood and marsh dog-wood spangled over with innumerable drip white blossoms; the yellow jessamine garlanding the thicket, and throwing its cluster of bright cups from the end of the twigs. The buck's eye, a shrub with bright green leaves and red flower-buds, and the red-berry, covered with peach-coloured blossoms, were seen every where in the swampy borders of the forest, with a multitude of others of all hues. Many varieties of the huckle-berry, with pendant white and red flowers, bordered the road. And, while the humbler underwood was thus putting on its beauty, the forest-trees above gave manifest tokens of their being under the same influence. Like the former, few had assumed their verdure, but many had arrayed themselves to the end of every twig in such brilliant colours, as completely to eclipse all competition. The red-oak appeared covered with yellow, and the water oak with red caskins—but all other trees of the forest were outvied by the graceful maple, every bough and twig of which was thickly clustered with keys of the most splendid blood-red hue.

In the vicinity of the farms, innumerable peach trees; the green leaves of the Pride of China—the most ornamental tree of the South—spread gaiety over the landscape; and as we moved yet further south, the azaleas, iris, innumerable violets, and many splendid aquatic plants formed a border to the roads, while the Chickasaw-rose, a beautiful briar with snow-white expanded flowers and yellow stamina, was abundant near the plantations.

The low swamps to which I have alluded, are a feature of the Southern States, and at that time were extended on every side by the swollen state of the great rivers which descend from the Alleghany to the eastward, and worm their way through the low alluvial regions of this part of the continent. They had also their own peculiar scenery; and those in the vicinity of the Pedee and Santee, have also their historical interest, as being the scenes of the guerilla warfare carried on in the revolutionary war by Tarlton and Marion, both excellent officers and brave men. The great extent of land covered by the last-mentioned rivers and their adjoining swamps, and the great floods to which they are liable, interpose constant checks to the regular and easy progress of travellers; and we found that the passage of both was attended with a certain degree of detention and difficulty. In both cases the carriage had to be left behind; and in the first, our persons, and the mail-bags and baggage were transferred to a canoe on the edge of what seemed a boundless forest situated in an over-flooded swamp. As we paddled silently into its recesses, on a fine and sunny spring morning, we seemed to be removed further and further from the day,—such was the effect of the dim twilight shed upon the black pool from the crowded state and vast size of the cypress and water-oak which rose around us, cloaked in that long, grey parasitical moss, which weaves its funereal strings into a dusky mantle upon the branches. Sometimes we shot noiselessly into a little opening where high above us we caught a glimpse of the blue sky, and the sun gleaming brightly upon the caskins and keys of the oak and maple on the topmost branches; or descried the soaring flight of the broad-winged turkey-buzzard—the vulture of the south, and the most detestable of the feathered race in its habits, but the most exquisitely graceful in its aerial movements. He builds his nest in hollow trees in the deepest recesses of these and similar morasses, and with such jealous care that it is very seldom discovered.

The cypress is the prince of the swamp, often growing to an immense size. It is ordinarily seen rising from an expanded and conical buttress or root, six or eight feet from the ground, into a clear shaft of eighty feet and upwards, from which it spreads into long sweeping branches, covered in summer with very light and graceful strings of foliage, and almost invariably cloaked by the Spanish moss. Alligators abound in all the waters in this latitude, but we were too early for them. The genial warmth which I have described as arousing the whole vegetable world, has not yet been able to thaw his torpid heart and stomach, in which, if the vulgar belief may be credited, a stout log of wood lies entombed all winter long; and I met with a farmer who assured me he had shot one in the early spring which attacked his hog-pen, which had 'a pine chunk and two rocks in his maw.'

As we proceeded, the current of the river began to be perceptible among the trees, and after a while we issued into the broad and rapid bed of the Pedee, and were hurried across it.

The same night, after a short halt at Georgetown, we crossed the two branches of the Santee and the intermediate canal, partly by ferry and partly by a boat, and in the course of the following morning reached Charleston, having listened for some hours during the night to the roar of the Atlantic, parallel to whose shores our road continued to run for many miles, resounding through the intermediate forests.

I do not know if you are sufficiently alive to the political affairs of the United States to recollect that in the course of the previous year misunderstandings had arisen between the Northern and the Southern States of the Union, and especially South Carolina, which seemed for a while to threaten something very like a civil war. The idea of an appeal to force being advisable, to compel the State in question to submit herself to the will of the General Government, which had been seriously entertained, had been met by the refractory part of the Carolinians with a determination to resist force by force, with more high spirit than prudence; the more so as there existed among their own citizens, a very strong and influential party arrayed on the opposite side; and we had been entertained in various places on our route to see the preparations to resist invasion which had been adopted by the inhabitants. It is true that before we quitted Baltimore the question had been set at rest for the time, by a politic measure introduced by one of the leading orators of the day, and that no further idea of violence was contemplated. Yet the blood of the Carolinians was up, and we found Charleston in a ferment. Reviews of troops, party balls, and public congratulations, were the order of the day; for, as the matter stood, both sides, the Unionists and Nullifiers, alike claimed the victory. The Unionists had had their parade, and now the Nullifiers were in the midst of their rejoicings. Neither the time nor the season seemed to be propitious, and we resolved, after a brief period of repose, to continue our route southward, which we ultimately did, reaching Savannah after two days further travel.

The road was monotonous, lying on the causeways raised above the level of the swamps, or over an undulating country, called 'the barrens,' covered with deep sand, and a growth of tall pitch-pine. The features are soon sketched. Here and there you meet with wide plantations, consisting of an open cultivated district, and frequently marked by a substantial well built manor-house, surrounded by plantations, and connected with the high road by an avenue of live-oaks, a beautiful species of which we shall see more anon. Then came a desert tract of land for many miles, situated too high for the growth of rice, and too low for that of wheat or cotton. Then a pretty village with fine trees; or a little chapel embosomed in the deep pine forest, long seen at the termination of the straight narrow sandy road, through which you move at a snail's pace, listening to the chirping and whistling of frogs and grasshoppers, and whizzing of wood-bugs, or lulled to a doze by the musical and harmonious sound produced by the friction of the coach wheels in deep sand. Such a church I remember, standing beneath the dark shade, miles from every human habitation. It was not devoid of symmetry, and looked picturesque in the twilight of the failing day, with its little quadrangular belfry, and broad piazza in front. There was a soothing charm in the very solitude of its position, and in the appearance of the assemblage of little tombs on the hallowed ground under the surrounding trees.

Streams were frequent, but the ferries enabled you to pass them without much delay. Both the mode and style of entertainment for the traveller was vastly inferior to that of the more northern states; and the same remark applies to the whole south, as far as we could judge. The meals were scanty and invariably the same. Fresh meat was rarely seen, and the whole population seemed to exist on salt provisions alone, with now and then the addition of a little poultry and pastry. There was something ungracious in the manner of welcome and subsequent treatment, which made you at once feel that the parties conceived that there was no reciprocity of gentle offices between you, and that, notwithstanding the price of every common necessary was exorbitant, you were the party obliged, and that the obligation could never be repaid. As elsewhere in the less travelled parts of the Union, you often sat down at the same table with the family, and were served in common with them,—no hardship in itself,—but you cannot imagine the difficulty of winning over the matron or the other female members of the family to the most common and ordinary interchange of civility or conversation. It appeared that they were so little accustomed to be treated with civility that they considered it all as impertinence. Monosyllables were the utmost that could be extracted; and when my vivacious friend would banter me with my constant failure to strike up a conversation, were it only to gain a little more time, I was continually reminded of my unsuccessful attempts to lure the turkeys of the Arkansas by polite speeches, as elsewhere recorded. Ordinarily the only personage about the household, who seemed kindly disposed and ready to return an answer to any well-intentioned remark, was the little black urchin, who, being the mistress's pet, was allowed to linger in the house and to wear the cast-off clothes of the family, in which I have seen one of his tribe attired in the most singularly grotesque fashion, the ample under garment being held up and in contact with the jacket by one single broad brass button just under the throat. He might further be empowered to run about the table and act as fly-flapper, with an old newspaper fastened to the end of a stick, whisking the same about your nose and plate with the most ludicrous air of importance, while with rolling eyes and bright teeth he evidently swallowed every word that was thrown away upon his superiors.

The impressions obtained, from what we saw of slavery, both in the Southern States and the West, was that, in most of the Slave States, the holders were to be pitied rather than the negroes, whose condition, on many of the Virginia and Western plantations, is that rather of pet and spoilt children, than anything else. Their condition is far from a pitiable one, all slaves though they be. The general feeling of the country is against cruelty. In Louisiana, the depôt of all the incorrigible slaves from the other States, matters may indeed be otherwise, and I believe it is a just observation that none make such relentless and severe task-masters as the inhabitants of the Eastern States, when they happen to become slave proprietors. But the circumstances which have entailed the possession of slaves at the present day on the Americans of the South, are to be deplored and felt as an evil, and what the consequence will be of the steady increase of the coloured population, both free and slave, no one can foresee. The philanthropic or politic attempts made to induce and facilitate emigration and the colonization of portions of the African coast, are well meaning and well directed, but the good effected hitherto, has been so trifling when compared with the growth of the evil, that the subject must remain a most alarming and embarrassing one; and judging from appearances only one of two alternatives would appear probable, either, that the coloured population would in course of time eat the white out of house and home, and come into possession of that portion of the country which appears as congenial to the habits and physical construction of the black, as it is inimical to those of the white; or, that a mixed race should spring up claiming an equality of rights and consideration; and the latter is far from being improbable, in spite of the loathing with which the white now appears to regard the man of mingled blood, both morally and politically.

Savannah is one of the most striking cities in the Union, regularly built on a high, sandy bluff, with a very regular ground-plan, and numerous picturesque houses standing at intervals with rich gardens between them. Its whole plan and arrangement fit it for the climate. The broad rectangular streets are lined with luxuriant Melia and Locust-trees, and there are frequent open squares with grass plots.

The few days we spent here, and in visiting the rice-plantations in the vicinity, were extremely agreeable; and we have ample cause to bear our testimony to the warmth of southern hospitality, and the fine manly tone and cultivation of Georgian society.

If we had met with difficulties in southern travelling hitherto, we had others in advance. With the means at hand in the form of dollars, you may achieve any thing practicable in the Northern States; but in the South, money will hardly enable you to travel. Our object was to penetrate as far as we could into Florida, before the increased heat of the season should render sojourn so far south, inadvisable. With the greatest difficulty we made arrangements to proceed, as we thought, to the town of St. Mary on the frontier, by hiring a carriage and pair of horses;—but on the second day after our departure from Savannah, we were brought to a sudden stand-still at the village of Darien, on the river Alatamaha; a rise of the waters having rendered the passage of the main river and the swamps beyond, impossible for a carriage. A short consultation took place, the upshot of which was, that we resolved to dismiss our vehicle, and remain here till we could procure the means of pursuing our route by water through the Sounds and salt-water canals, by which the whole coasts of Georgia and Florida are cut up, and which afford facilities to interior navigation. The owner of a small sloop was expected to return to Darien in the course of a day or two. And with that pliability of mind and purpose which men attain to by being knocked about in the world, we yielded with good grace to the necessity, took possession of the quarters ceded to us in a much more comfortable inn than usually met with, struck up an acquaintance with Monsieur le Comte de C. an old gentleman of French descent, next door, and applauding our good fortune in having been brought to a halt in one of the most lovely villages of the south, sat down contentedly to await our next adventure.

LETTER II.

It was now the close of the first week in April. If our passage from Richmond to Charleston had introduced us to the full charms of Spring, that to Darien seemed to have brought us to the matured vegetation and heats of summer, and we were now fairly in the 'sweet south.'

About Savannah, the nose of the alligator had been detected peeping out of the pools in the rice fields; and now his ungainly and detestable form, cased in mud, might be seen ,sprawling among the tall reeds and grass of the swamps. The Cardinal-bird was observed constantly flying about the bright green foliage of the live oaks; flights of white curlews rose at your approach from the borders of the woods; the swamps swarmed with frogs, terrapins, and turtle; the air with splendid butterflies; the soil of the forest was covered with a thick under-growth of saw-palmetto, and in the vicinity of the village, while the eye was regaled by the beautiful lilac flowers and exquisite foliage of the Pride of China; the sense of smelling was cloyed by the delicious perfume of its flowers, and the yet richer odour of the orange and citron.

Many of the cottages in Darien were truly picturesque, and the streets rural and shady.

That sweetest of American songsters, the rival of the nightingale of the Old World—the mocking-bird, was in full song, and wooing its mate; and sweeter melody than that which filled the ear during the short southern twilight, and beguiled the hours of darkness, was surely never heard under the stars. I have often listened to that song elsewhere, in the deep woods of the North and West; but, whether it was the season, or the union of circumstances and thought which attuned my own temper and mind to the harmony,—I think I never heard that inexplicably varied song poured forth with such effect, as amid the sweet-scented dews of Darien. The air was filled with its vibrations, hour after hour, and every quality—power, clearness, and melody seemed united and perfected in the quiet efforts of that sweet-throated bird. Their numbers were greater than I had ever witnessed elsewhere. If you stole in the starlight up the river bank, from your seat under the piazzas of the village, there was no danger of your leaving the melody behind.

There was a secluded dip on the shore full of palmetto and other low bushes, into which you descended by a winding footpath between rocky sand-stone banks. A couple of canoes were moored within its shelter; and, at the foot of the sand-stone rock, where an aged tree slanted across it, a fresh spring welled out and ran its short bubbling course to the river.

Here it was delicious to linger in the darkness, and listen to the melody in the branches above you. And again, between this point and the village lay an ancient Indian Mound, on the verge of a lawn-like piece of level sward, extending from the steep high bank of the Alatamaha some distance towards the forest; with groups of live oak sprinkled over it and thickening towards the cottages and rude church on its confines. Here, on both evenings of our stay, I marked one of these syrens take its perch on a solitary bush which broke the uniformity of the swell of the mound, and sit hour after hour, alternately listening to and answering the notes of a mate concealed among the thick foliage and hanging moss of a distant tree. I listened to it till I thought I could almost interpret its full varied tale, with its innumerable periods. If the intensity of feeling be at all commensurate with the intensity and power of expression—who shall fathom the depth of that which God has implanted in the little fluttering heart of these his songsters? What can match the thrilling extasy of those clear and redundant notes, or express the depth of pathos, of which those slow plaintive modulations convey an impression to the breast. There is nothing in nature that speaks to me more plainly of the goodness of God, than the overflowing, heartful, and joyous song of a bird. Is this not the voice of praise, and is it not the song of unutterable gratitude?

Who can listen to a strain like this, or study the nature and attributes of any individuals within the scope of animate nature, without being struck with the degree of perfection which seems to be stamped on each in its sphere, however confined that may be; and, making the reflection, what a distinct line is to be drawn between man and them. The one we believe created with nobler powers and impulses, and for nobler ends; but, having fallen, now irregular and vacillating, subject to a thousand imperfections; the others, as far as we know, the creatures of a day; but how perfect, and how uniform in their generations!

I never at any time approached the Indian mounds, those relics of a people and of a time of which no recollection or tradition has been preserved, without interest and feeling. That the hands that reared them should long ago have been mingled with the clay of which they formed these simple, but enduring monuments, excites no wonder: generation departs after generation—one dynasty follows another—one nation perishes, and its place is filled by another; but it is seldom that all memory, all tradition is lost of a people. A name alone may remain, without any other distinctive feature,—but that is yet a name, and under it, the existence of a distinct division of the human race may yet stand recorded in the book of the world's history. But here, on this vast continent, dispersed over a great extent of territory, you find the relics of an utterly forgotten race. They must have been a numerous one, for the magnitude of the works they have left behind them attest it. You see mounds raised upon the rich level plains of the West, which will ever remain a marvel. They must have attained to a certain degree of civilization and sedentary habits, superior to the races whom the present age has seen in turn displaced by those of our own hue and blood:—they were more civilized, more powerful, more enlightened than the Indian races of our day. We read this truth in the vestiges of their towns and fortifications, and the lands once cultivated by them,—yet it is in vain you pry into the secret of their deeds, time of existence, or history. You dig into their places of sepulture—you handle their bones; but they are silent, and tell you nothing;—and the utensils you unearth, only show you that they were numerous, and however powerful, simple in their habits.

Thus we see among mankind, change follows change,—language language,—one people treads in the steps and on the graves of their predecessors; and among men nothing like perfection is seen;—even the advance in cultivation and the attainment of light and knowledge being by no means progressive. It is often retarded for centuries, and every thing in connection with humanity shows the imperfection of its fallen nature, the weakness of its purposes, and the futility of its projects, though distinguished above the rest of God's earthly creations, by the gift of a living soul in addition to the common boon of the breath of life, granted to animate nature. Man is less perfect for the time being, and subject to greater vicissitudes than even the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, whom he affects to govern and despise. And this is impressed on my mind as I listen to the song of these sweet birds.

There are voices yet abroad in the land of those forgotten tribes, at this very moment, singing the same sweet strain as rung through the oak-groves two thousand years ago! They have not forgotten the lessons taught the parents of their race in Paradise. God has stamped them with the species of perfection for which he designed them, and they have not departed from it. Their kind has suffered no vicissitudes — they have probably neither deteriorated nor attained greater perfection in any respect since the day of their creation, but have carolled, and nestled, and paired from generation to generation; fulfilling the end for which they were apparently created; while race after race of human beings has arisen and passed away, and the earth has been alternately filled and deserted by nations and individuals perfect in nothing. Without the certainty of immortality, and the sweet hope of being restored, through God's mercy, to that estate from which we have fallen, might we not well be tempted to despair!

On the morning of the third day, the pilot, for whose arrival we had been on the watch, returned with his tiny sloop from St. Mary's; and we instantly struck a bargain, by which, under certainly very favourable conditions, he placed himself and his craft at our disposal for the projected voyage, or any other that we should desire.

So now you may imagine us conveying our travelling gear on board the 'Anne Rosette of Darien.'—Clement, a mulatto from St. Domingo, master—and the 'pious Mister Evance,' a little old battered man-of-war's sailor, looking more like a huge swab than a white man, and as deaf as a post,—at the same time mate and crew. He got the unusual epithet attached to his name from a habit he had of moralizing upon his own character: as he said to us one day—'I never murdered no one, nor stealed, nor did adultery—but only now and then I gets drunk—and that's what the quality do!' There was just room under the little deck for us to stow away our portmanteaus and provisions, and spread a few sails and cloaks for our nightly accommodation. After running home to shave, and talk to his wife for an hour, Clement made his appearance about noon, with the sweeps on his shoulder; and wind and tide being fair, he unmoored, jumped in, and took his place at the helm.

'Up main-sail!—up peak now!—belay that—lay it chock forward there!—now the jib!' and we swung round before the wind, shot across the broad Alatamaha, and entered General Oglethorpe's canal.

The whole coast appears cut up into low islands and patches of salt marsh by innumerable lagoons and canals, whose waters of course rise and fall with the tide. Here and there, as in the instance just mentioned, the hand of man has rendered the interior navigation yet more direct and complete by an artificial cut across an isthmus.

The winding course of the channel for which we had forsaken the river, soon brought the wind a-head; but we tacked merrily forward among the verdant grassy or wooded banks, and in the course of some time emerged into Buttermilk Sound, which we crossed, and entered St. Simon's river. Many an alligator was roused from his nap on the shore as we glided by among the mud-banks, and came floundering down through the sedge and slime into the water, while our buck-shot rattled innoxiously about his hardened case to quicken his motion. As might be expected from the character of the country, the solitude of these lonely canals and basins is rarely broken by the presence of permanent habitations. Entire hours passed, during which we heard no sound but the plunge of the abominable beast just mentioned, or the jabber and chuckle of the blackbird of the country, as it balanced itself on the lithe willow, or hung among the tall stalks of grass.

Towards evening we passed Hamilton's Plantation, situated on the higher shores of St. Simon's Island which separated us from the ocean. We were greeted by the delicious perfume of the orange-groves ashore, and pushed forward, as well as we might, towards the entrance of St. Simon's Sound; but the wind lulled at sun-down, and the tide failing us after dark, we were obliged to anchor mid-way between the shores.

We sat long on our little deck and watched the stars, ere we dived into the low and narrow quarters below. St. Simon's lighthouse could be seen over a long low promontory to the south. There were many indications of an approaching gale. Our tiny sloop rocked with an uneasy and irregular motion, on a short broken swell which stirred the smooth surface from beneath. A deep, dark, bank of clouds rose in the West, a few degrees above the horizon, where it remained stationary, except that now and then small ragged portions would detach themselves from the upper edge, and flying up, obscure the evening star.

Twice the most singularly disagreeable and boding sound that you can conceive, came across the water to us from the lonely shore,—such as at the time completely baffled our speculation with regard to its cause. Clement said that he had often heard it under like circumstances; and that it boded bad weather. It is a hateful sound, though it in fact comes out of the throat of a silly bird; and I can well imagine that it may often have thrilled the bosom of the blood-stained buccaneer or pirate, as he held his midnight watch among the solitary Indian keys. There was another sound which was perfectly novel to us, but of yet more ready explanation. It was frequent and smothered, proceeding as it were from immediately under the keel of the boat, but yet deep and sonorous, just as though a gong had been struck at the depth of five fathoms. This was caused by the Drum-fish. How he produces it I do not know; but we had repeated opportunities subsequently of listening to it, and of seeing the musician himself. He is both large and heavy, moreover, good eating; and is furnished with an extraordinary apparatus, which our men called an 'oyster-crusher,' the palate and throat being armed with powerful sets of bony teeth, arranged in two flat square planes close together, like the teeth of a file. With these he operates upon the shell-fish, but whether the sound has anything to do with this terrible kind of mastication or not, I cannot say.

After an uneasy night, we ran down as far as the lighthouse with the morning tide—and during the course of the second day, as wind or tide permitted, scudded across the Sound, glanced through the narrow straits among the islands to the east, at the open sea—passed Turtle river, leaving the town of Brunswick far to the right; and in spite of the stormy wind which blew right a-head,—true to the prognostics of the preceding evening—finally made good our passage of the agitated surface of broad St. Andrew's Sound. It was not achieved without long and rough beating about, and some risk—but the Anne Rosette behaved well, and approved herself a good sea-boat—Clement, a steady pilot—Mister Evance, a most efficient crew, aided as he was in the multifarious duties consequent upon frequent tacking, by all the extra hands on board; and though pretty well drenched to the skin, we weathered the danger, and reaching a lee-shore, cast anchor till the turn of the tide, with a long line of snow-white breakers thundering upon the bar to the sea-ward, at the entrance of the Sound. We ran up, after dark, to the north end of Cumberland Island, where we lay all night on a bleak shore; listening, now to the sounds of the tempest from the main, and then to the chorus of the Drum-fish under the boat.

At early dawn, we breakfasted upon the oysters on the banks close under our lee, and with the flood-tide beat our way into, and through Cumberland River, as far as Dungeness-House; where, in the course of the afternoon, the increase of the gale brought us to, in spite of our wish to get into St. Mary's that night. There are many fine plantations on the outer range of islands bordering the Atlantic, of which Cumberland Island is one of the longest on this part of the coast. Contrary to the character of the lands further removed from the sea, they lie high and dry, and have their own peculiar beauties. To make the most of our detention, my comrade and myself went ashore, and crossing the open beach and the meadow beyond, we entered the natural screen, formed by a thickly-tangled grove of live-oak, palmetto, myrtle, sweet-bay, magnolia, and spanish moss, and reached the 'Quarter,' or a part of the estate occupied by the negro-dwellings.

The scene was as novel as it was delightful. The simple and airy habitations of the slaves rose among a wilderness of saw-palmetto and other shrubs, and were shaded by a grove of Pride of China and live oaks, stretching in an unbroken avenue to the house, a large and roomy edifice, apparently built of a concrete of shells and lime, and surrounded with delicious orange and olive groves full of mocking-birds and nonpareils. The island here might be about a mile across, and the opposite shore, piled with high white sand-hills and broken by clay banks, breasted the rolling surf of the wide and unbounded Atlantic. Dungeness-House was long, I believe, the head-quarters of Admiral Cockburn in the last war.

Our stay here was cut short by our perceiving, during our stroll, that the wind had lulled, and, regaining the sloop, we passed St. Mary's Sound.

As we found that we could pursue the same course of interior navigation as far as St. John's River, we promptly decided to proceed without turning aside, and leaving the town of St. Mary at the bottom of the Bay to the left, we entered the mouth of Amelia River, and landed at the decayed town of Fernandina, situated on Amelia Island, within the Florida frontier.

Fernandina sprung up to a kind of importance during the embargo of 1808, and subsequent war; and for a while was a place of very great bustle. As the frontier town of Florida, then still a Spanish province, and at the head of a direct line of inland communication with the St. John's river, it became the resort of a numerous body of adventurers of all nations. It was the harbour for pirates and smugglers without number, and was the 'jumping-place' of the refuse of Georgia and the adjoining states. At that time the difficulties between Spain and her Colonies, and the quarrel between England and the United States, both added to the reverses which it experienced during its short but feverish existence. In those times it was not unusual to see three hundred sail in its roads—now the arrival of our little boat was considered as an extraordinary event. The cession of the Floridas to the United States, and the termination of the war with all its attendant evils, put an end to its temporary importance; and it is now no easy matter to believe that the wrecks of buildings sprinkled over the site could ever have formed a town. Some prophesy, and it would appear with a degree of reason, that it will eventually rise from its ruins, as it has incontestibly the best harbour and the easiest of access, along the coast.

It is still inhabited by a few families, chiefly of Spanish descent, and among them we were welcomed and treated with great kindness, attention, and hospitality. We spent part of the following day in rambling over the Island, which rises to a far greater height than its neighbours. Every thing indicated decay;—we saw everywhere ruined houses and deserted cotton-fields, where the ancient vegetation had regained its sway. From the site of a former house and pleasure grounds, whose tangled avenues might yet be traced, situated on a high and commanding knoll, the view was of a far more varied character than we had seen since we descended into North Carolina. It ranged over the swelling uplands of Amelia Island, now covered with verdure—the roadstead of Fernandina—St. Mary's bay and town, Cumberland Island beyond, Dungeness House, and the wide Atlantic. No pen can paint the luxuriance of the thickets of beautiful shrubs and low trees, which weave a labyrinth under the shelter of the sand-hills of the shore—or the multitude of splendid plants and insects which cover the undulating surface of the interior.

On many of these islands these natural shrubberies had a beauty quite beyond the reach of man's imitation, especially some of those to the southward, where the large cabbage Palmettoes, and the Indian fig, became more frequent, where innumerable vines interlaced the foliage of the trees into a leafy roof, and the light green of the deciduous shrubs was contrasted by the glossy foliage of the magnolia and cedar.

Proceeding, we sailed through the natural canals behind Amelia and Talbot Islands, and the following morning found ourselves deserted by both wind and tide at a plantation on St. George's Island.

Our stay there was very interesting, but I am fearful of tiring you by repetitions, and I shall bring our voyage to a close, by stating that in the evening of the fifth day from our departure from Darien, we reached the St. John's river, which ranks as the largest in Florida. We crossed it some miles from its mouth, and a little below the Bluff bearing the same name, entered a canal which led towards the plantation, known by the name Il Pablo; and in fine, the Anne-Rosette landed us in a wet marsh, through which we had to wade for half a mile to the house. Evening set in as dark as a negro's face, and incessant thunder and pouring rain made us feel grateful for the termination of this part of our southern adventures, notwithstanding that we had found the voyage both amusing and sufficiently varied. The master of the plantation was absent, but his wife, a woman of prepossessing appearance and a cultivated mind, with an admixture of Spanish blood in her veins, made us welcome.

From this point our journey to St. Augustine was to be prosecuted over land. Throughout this southern tour, few things had afforded me a greater fund of amusement than the singularly hap-hazard and disorderly way of living observable on the farms and plantations; and I cannot convey to you a better idea of what I mean, than by referring to what I saw here; and accordingly beg you, while the carriage in which we are to pursue our journey is preparing, to take a quiet peep upon the arrangements both within and without. The main dwelling was a frame house, supported above the level of the ground on stones, or logs at the corners. It stood alone, without a single casement, but with a little covered gallery in front, from which you could cast your eye over an extended marshy flat, with an occasional oasis of tall cabbage, palmettos or brushwood. The interior was divided into two or three dwelling and sleeping apartments, and so furnished, as to admit of a degree of comfort in hot weather, but comfortless enough else.

The necessary adjuncts to a large dwelling-house and plantation, instead of being in orderly and convenient contiguity to the principal mansion, were dispersed within or about the fenced enclosure as follows. The safe and the pantry stood about five paces from the front door, overshadowed by a fine mulberry tree. The smoke house was three paces further to the right; the log-built kitchen as far, but rather more in front to the left; the flour-mill and cart-shed still further in the rear under a palmetto thatch; the sugar-mill and boiling house, and seven other sheds and outhouses, of all forms and dimensions, were to be seen scattered about, as though they had been shaken together in a blanket, and suffered to fall at random on the earth, at a moderate distance from each other. Then there was the dove-cote; and a quadrangular paled enclosure overshadowed by trees formed the place of family sepulture at some distance beyond the outer gate. The vice and the anvil were each lying in a different place; the step-ladder was lodged in a fork of the mulberry tree; the wheelbarrow and chopping-machine were half hidden in the rank grass in a corner of the yard, where a fine fig tree overhung the angle of the fence; the axe and chopping block reposed in one corner, and the carpenter's table in another. Bridles and a grease-pot hung in a tree, and the plough was thrust behind the house under the flooring. A broken-down gig without wheels peered out from under the shed. As to the rest, cocks and hens, and Muscovy-ducks crowded the enclosure, and walked and waddled in and out of the house. Five or six dogs are still to be added to my inventory. They all seemed bitten beyond bearing by the musquitos and sand-flies, and now and then came together to whine and to scratch each other. Lastly, before the open gate to the south, stood our vehicle, the simplicity of whose springs would certainly have excluded it from paying the tax in England,—with the two beasts of draught, the one a stallion called Pound-cake, and the other a mule, who wagged his long ears at the call of John! In this we took our seats, and after a long and wearisome day's journey of forty miles, over horrible roads; through a wilderness of saw-palmetto, swamps, and groves of cabbage-palm, jolted almost to dislocation of our bones, and bitten by musquitoes to the utter loss of patience, we found ourselves rumbling after dark through the ruined gateways and narrow streets of St. Augustine.

LETTER III.

The remark has been frequently made by my various companions and myself with regard to travelling in America, that no kind of dependance is to be placed upon the information you may gather with regard to the natural features and relative degree of beauty of any given part of the country, out of the general line of every day travel. The custom of using inflated terms, and the biggest words the dictionary furnishes, to describe every object which may interest the narrator, is calculated to mislead an European, and this we have often found to our cost; and have sometimes had to own, after a tour of a few hundred miles, that the object was ill-deserving of the time, labour, and expense which the attainment of it had entailed.

This observation truly applies to the tour, of which I am giving you the outlines. The very name of Florida has carried a charm with it, and in addition having fallen into the common mistake, which has been perpetuated by lying romancers and mendacious travellers, with regard to its surpassing beauty, every one from whom we had obtained more direct intelligence, had contrived, with no wish on their part to deceive, to add to the false impression. However, it had spurred us forward; and when fatigued with the fir-forests and the half-exhausted fields of the Carolinas, and the swamps and rice-plantations of Georgia,—we still looked forward to Florida with little less ardour than Ponce de Leon. But it was to us, as to him, ‘the Land of Disappointment.’ The peculiar beauty of some of the islands, with their thick bowers and carpet of flowers, and those irresistible charms which the season threw over natural objects as we approached the confines of this enchanted region of birds, flowers, crabs, serpents, and butterflies, rather added to, than allayed our impatience; but, from the moment we had fairly got into the country, by the passage of the St. John's river, our eyes began to be opened, and whoever will take the trouble to follow our footsteps over the Peninsula to the Gulf, will have his opened likewise. I am far from asserting that he will not find many a lovely flower, and see many a beautiful bird, but the land is no paradise. On the contrary, he will pass hundreds of miles over the most sterile tracts he can conceive. What can be more so than the barrens, with the gigantic growth of pitch-pine—what more fatiguing than the boundless swamp, whether salt-water or fresh? That there are to be found districts in Florida where the speculator may meet with soil, fully adequate from its position and the climate it enjoys, to the production of rich crops, and that many of the fruits and products of the tropics will come to maturity, is not to be doubted; but surely those spots are small in comparison to the vast extent of surface which seems to be devoted to sterility. However, though disappointed, there were parts of our tour which were far from being without interest, and the sketch of such is at your service. A hundred miles of fatiguing and monotonous travel are forgotten when you reach a spot where all strikes you as novel and rare.

At the close of my last, we had arrived at St. Augustine, whose delicious climate has gained for it the title of the Montpelier of the continent on which, with exception of the early European settlements in Mexico, it is the oldest town.

The first colony in Florida was a Protestant one, and formed in 1562, a little to the southward of St. John's river, by a number of refugee Huguenots, flying from persecution in Europe. They sought in a far land, that liberty of conscience which was denied them in France; but within two years of their landing, they were utterly extirpated by the Spaniards under circumstances of cruelty almost without parallel. St. Augustine was built about the same time. Its history has been a chequered one. It was repeatedly pillaged by Sir Francis Drake and others—fell into the hands of the British for twenty years subsequently to the peace of 1763, when by the testimony of many, it became a delightful town, filled with neat houses and gardens, despite the disadvantages of its situation. It subsequently reverted to its original possessors;

bore its share in the reverses of the Spanish crown in the Colonies, and was finally, twenty years ago, added to the United States, with the whole of the territory of which it was the seat of government.

It is situated on a neck of land, formed by the river Matanzas to the East, and the St. Sebastian, bordered by low swamps, to the south and west. The Mantazas, which forms the harbour in front, is separated from the Atlantic by Anastasia island, a congeries of low sand-hills and grassy salt marshes.

The town lies on the main shore, and is separated from the back of the peninsula by a creek running parallel to it, on the western side of which the inhabitants have their principal fields and gardens. Upon the whole, there is nothing striking in the situation. The town is built, as you may imagine in the Spanish style, with narrow streets, and low houses of irregular form and fashion, chiefly of stone or a concrete of sea-shells dug from the outward shore of the opposite island. They consist mainly of a ground-floor paved with a rude stucco, and a single story above, containing the dwelling apartments. There are frequent balconies towards the street, and galleries over-looking the courts to the back. You see many dilapidated buildings, ruinous and roofless, of which the materials are carried off by degrees for the erection of other edifices or walls, and gardens full of orange trees fill up the spaces. All the marks of English care were swept away during the subsequent indolent reign of the original builders: and the ruin into which the habitations and their purlieus then fell, under neglect and desertion, the ravages of the damp climate, and the devastating storms of the South, have not yet given place to general good order. Like all Spanish towns, it has its Plaza or public square, surrounded by the great church and principal municipal buildings; all of which are more remarkable for both exterior and interior neglect, than for symmetry. The fort of St. John, commanding the harbour and town, is strong, well built, and is by far the most regular fortification in the Union; and though at present neglected, and only used as a prison, is capable of being put into complete repair at a moderate expense. The government maintained a small garrison in barracks at the opposite extremity of the town.

St. Augustine was ruined by the exchange of flags. Almost every inhabitant being dependant, directly or indirectly, upon the Spanish government for support, the majority of those of Spanish blood moved to Cuba, and the town now draws its revenues solely from its orange groves and fisheries.

By far the most interesting portion of the present population, and it may be added, the most respectable for their quiet demeanour and inoffensive habits, are those of Minorcan and Italian descent. Sixty years ago, or thereabouts, eight hundred of the so-called redemptioners were kidnapped from the islands and coasts of the Mediterranean, brought to the Musquito lagoon, and forced to labour as slaves in the drainage of a large tract of country; till the tyranny to which they were exposed, incited them to rise upon their oppressors and free themselves from the yoke. They settled for the most part in this town, and here their children form a distinct community, retaining their national features, language, religion, and manners. They are honest, simple, and laborious in their occupations as fishermen and farmers. They forcibly brought before me the scenes and sounds of sunny Italy; and it was difficult at times, when we stood near a group of these graceful dark-eyed people, mending their nets on the shore, or plying their long broad-bladed Italian paddle, and heard the soft tones of their language, to believe that we were thousands of miles from that delicious country. About ten of the original stock were still alive in St. Augustine, at the time of our visit. Their cottages, which were in the narrow streets nearest the water, were to a certain degree picturesque; festooned with nets, and roses, shaded by orange trees; and hung round with cages of nonpareils and other singing birds.

Now that we had reached St. Augustine, it appeared for reasons soon to be mentioned, as if we should never get away; and during our prolonged stay, we had opportunity of seeing every thing that had the least interest within the narrow confines in which we were pent up, again and again. The adjoining country is hideous. As usual in such positions, I resort to the more intimate examination of objects of natural history. I had become acquainted with every quarter in the little town; the ruins of every monastery, the shape of every fish brought on shore by the fisherman. I passed over to the island, examined the ocean-beach, and its quarries of shell-stone, and the cross-surmounted sand heap, where some forty years ago, a number of nuns transported from Spain, to inhabit a nunnery, the ruins of which rose before the windows of our little inn, found an unexpected grave.

Their voyage was over,—they had passed the great sea,—the green shore of the Floridas had blessed their longing eyes,—they might descry the cathedral tower of their future home,—and already within the bar, you might imagine them raising the Te Deum; when a sudden squall made their vessel a complete wreck; all on board perished, and as the bodies were cast ashore, there they were buried.

There was a great dearth of plants and insects here, as elsewhere along the southern coast; but there is one singular animal, which, from its peculiarities and immense numbers, may claim notice before we move inland. The Florida reefs and keys are celebrated for the great variety and beauty of crustacede which frequent them, and many a splendidly coloured crab and lobster they produce. They swarm along the whole coast, under one form or another, from the species common on the more northern shores,—where the crab-loving Baltimorian, taking advantage of their repairing into the shallows of the Chesapeake to cast their shells, hooks them up before they have had time to furnish themselves with a new coat of armour, and converts them into one of the greatest epicurean delicacies of the table,—to the small Fiddler-crab, whose shoals and myriads cover every piece of marsh, and perforate every bank within reach of the tide, from Georgia southward. Such is their number, that they form a feature in the view to the traveller on these shores. As you walk or ride over the sand, you see the road before you covered by thousands, who recoil and vanish in their holes as you advance, with a celerity which is perfectly magical, when you consider their singularly grotesque form, and the unaccountable freak of nature in furnishing them with one enormous claw, from the position of which, as it reclines on the back, they have their popular name. You must not suppose that they are denied the proper compliment of nippers. They are complete as to number, but all regularity and symmetry in size and strength seems to have been sacrificed to the enlargement of the one in question, and the scramble of the crowd to get out of the way of the approaching danger, with these burdensome appendages, is irresistibly ludicrous.

The remark I have made elsewhere with regard to the difficulty of travelling in the South, was again exemplified at St. Augustine, where we had to labour for days and days before we could make any arrangement to cross the country to Tallahassie. Roads further to the southward there were none, and even a return upon the one by which we had arrived, seemed impracticable, without a great loss of time at almost every stage of it. A thousand impediments appeared to stand in the way,—neither horses, nor men were to be procured for at any price some days; and, when in the end, we found ourselves packed up as close as practicable, in an awkward machine, called a 'carry-all,' drawn by two wretched horses, and conducted by a mulatto, setting out for our expedition of two hundred and forty miles across the country, we could hardly believe our good fortune. The proposed termination of our journey was the town of Tallahassie, near St. Mark's, and it was with the greatest difficulty that we were able to effect it in ten days time. With the exception of Jacksonville on the river St. John, which we reached by great exertion on the evening of the first day, we passed no settlement of any size during the whole route, which for the most part lay over the barren and uninteresting region, covered with scattered pine forest. To add to our difficulties, the waters were out, all the streams swollen;—the low lands flooded, and bridges carried away—at the same time that the heat was at times almost suffocating. The horses fell ill, and the carriage broke; and by the time we arrived at Tallahassie, having been reduced to make use, more or less, of our legs, for the last thirty miles, we fancied we had quite seen enough of Florida.

In recalling the scenes of the country we passed through for many days, I can recollect little worthy of note. As we moved inland, the cabbage-palmetto which nearer the coast had here and there risen over the scrub bushes, was less frequently met with, and the surface was for the most part open and undulating, though sprinkled over with huge long-leaved pitch pine. Occasionally, the road led us through short, deep, and magnificently shaded woods swarming after dark with fire-flies. There was one interesting feature of the country, and it is that of the whole Peninsula, consisting in innumerable sink-holes, circular ponds, and gushing springs of unusual volume, which deserve a passing notice, as they mark the peculiar geological structure of the country, and its cavernous interior. The whole substratum appears to be a porous limestone, filled with subterraneous springs and deposits of water, producing the two former phenomena by the subsidence of the layers, and giving birth to the last. The volume of water sent up from the depths of some of these boiling and pellucid fountains, is astonishingly great, and they are far more remarkable than those springs of a similar character which I have remarked in former years in the Jura, and in mountains of Istria. These deep fountains are not only to be noticed on the land, but many of great size are known to exist in the marshes, lakes, and beds of the various rivers.

On account of the flooded state of the country, we were obliged to make halt for a day at one of the farms which lie scattered along the route at greater or less distances. Their existence was, of course, generally indicative of the presence of a more fertile body of land than usual, and some, in the vicinity of large wooded lakes, were not unpleasantly situated. The majority of the settlers were of the Georgian and

Carolinian stock, and friendly and hospitable: indeed, we had need of a little assistance, or we should never have extricated ourselves, our 'carry-all,' and its contents from the country.

Our host, in the farm where we were detained the longest, was a good specimen of his race. Naturally kind, generous, and careless,—he seemed to have learnt rather late in life, and after many reverses, to be careful and thrifty. By the affection with which he spoke of South Carolina, you could see that necessity and not choice had led him to forsake her exhausted lands for the hammocks and swamps of this land of flowers. By the dissatisfaction with which he spoke of the New England character, and the utter detestation he evinced towards the Yankee pedlar, it might be surmised that he had perchance been supplanted by the superior caution of the first, and been at one time or other taken in by the 'cuteness' of the other. He was ready to aid or entertain as far as lay in his power. He swopped a fresh horse with our mulatto for one which could not advance another step;—he sent on a negro to ascertain the state of the next river;—he took a long stroll with us in the morning—and sat under his little portico telling us all species of marvels in the heat of the day and long evening. He described to us the 'Alligator Sink,' one of the innumerable fathomless pools on the 'barrens,' where the quantity of those monsters was so great when they ascended in the spring from its unknown recesses, that the whole circle was as full as a tub of eels. He would tell us of the fights not unfrequently occurring in the swamps between that powerful reptile and the bear;—of the powers of the black-runner in destroying the rattle-snake, by the inconceivable swiftness of its motions, in spite of inferior size;—of the doe, whom instinct taught its mode of crushing the same dangerous enemy, by leaping on it at full career with her four hoofs, as it lay coiled up in the sun;—of the whip-snake, which would take hold of a tuft of grass with its mouth as you approached, and scutch you with its tail, till you removed yourself out of the way! What do you say to that? He assured us that if the young of that pretty bird, the American robin-red-breast, were taken from the nest, and placed in a cage within reach of the parents, they would not fail to come and feed them tenderly till such time as they were perfectly fledged: that then, if the old birds deemed their escape from the cage impossible,—they would speedily bring them poison-berries and kill them, refusing them life in captivity, since they could not enjoy it in freedom. Also, that in the same jealous spirit, if, before their young were hatched, they perceived that their nest was discovered, they straightway broke them and built elsewhere. Lastly, he would tell of the terrible conflagrations which take place from time to time among the pine-barrens to the southward, where some hundred square miles were charred, and stripped of their tall forest;—or of the dreadful effects of the tornado of the south, bursting on the land and levelling every obstacle with such resistless fury, that the very deer of the forest shared the fate of the Indian herds, and lay crushed under the wrecks with which the whole face of the country was strewed for leagues and leagues.

It may have been our peculiar position, between the forest and the swampy border of the lake, and the state of the weather, but at no time or period of our travels, before or after, were we regaled with a hubbub of nocturnal sounds in any way comparable to that which filled our ears on the second night of our stay here.

Sunset was announced by a general uproar in the yard among the dogs, negroes, and the fowls of every description, as a sly opossum was detected in a covert approach he was making from the bushes towards the roost, and a general hunt, which terminated by his capture and death, was the consequence. Then came the reign of the musquitoes, and the whip-poor-will and the wish-ton-wish—the two latter repeating unceasingly their plaintive and complaining cries; while the former rose in the air like a cloud, filling the ears with their unwelcome piping hum,—the face and hands with blisters,—and the heart with spite and impatience. The Florida musquito is the redoubted 'gallinipper' of the south; and a dozen stings are sufficient to make you sore for a week. The dragon-flies, which are fortunately both large, numerous and voracious, are now seen flitting among them, and destroying thousands, but what are a few thousands, when the very motes of the atmosphere seem turned into myriads.

The brief southern twilight steals over the landscape, —the haze thickens over the swamp,—the night-hawk is seen winging his restless flight to and fro, just glancing by, with the two white spots under its wings glaring in the dusk. The fire-flies begin their beautiful illumination, and the mocking-bird is silent,—and though there are frequent bird-calls from the wood, there is no vocalist of power among them.

Now and then a sound like a long drawn sigh is heard in the direction of the swamp, notifying the presence of the alligator: but his proper time for singing is about dawn, when you may hear him and his brethren roaring like a distant herd of bulls.

And now night settles deeper and deeper on the earth. The whip-poor-will and his neighbour cease their complainings, the night-hawk is no longer visible, the musquitoes begin to settle to their hiding-places, and the dragon-fly has filled his stomach, folded his wings and hangs sleeping under the twig. The singular glare seen on the eastern horizon, called by the settlers 'weather light,' glows duskily through the woods, portending, as our oracular host said, either 'terrible weather, or a continued dry season;' and this is the hour of enjoyment to myriads, whose voices have been hushed as long as the glare of the sun was seen, or the heat of the day, felt on the land and water. And such uproarious singing, whistling, chirping, whizzing, croaking, purring, and vibrating arises on all sides as you can form no idea of. An innumerable throng of frogs of all habits, dimensions and voices, pitched in every key, from the clear whistle of the beautiful pea-green, golden-eyed reptile that slumbers all day long in the cool scroll of the yet unfolded aquatic leaf, to the great yellow swimmer,—are heard to join harmony. How distance can mellow the harshest sound! Even the croak of the latter sounded musical; and there was one marshy spot not three hundred paces from the piazza, that sent forth a chorus of silver sounds like a chime of bells. But the frogs, great as their advantage might seem to be from the particularly favourable arrangement of their ample lungs, were outdone by insects of the gryllus and cicada tribes;—many of which sent forth sounds of such a shrill, harsh, and jarring character, as might rather be deemed to be the production of iron machinery, than that of small and insignificant insects, with their slender and delicate fibres As far as I could judge, this confused noise continued throughout the hours of the night, and did not cease till the fading stars and brightening east began to mark the dawn of day.

The largest river we passed after crossing the St. John's, was the Suwanee, flowing into the Gulf of Mexico. We reached the ferry on its bank with great difficulty, after the passage of a tract of matchless sterility, forty miles having been traversed without seeing a human habitation, and the greater part of them without a pool of water even in this land of fountains. The heat, also, was extremely great. The Suwanee is a beautiful dark and rapid stream flowing between deeply-wooded banks. We had hitherto overcome many difficulties, but now we had what was called an insuperable one before us. The 'bad bridge' over a powerful stream was said to have been carried from its position by the flood, and to be totally impassable. This, after getting within fifty miles of Tallahassee, seemed too provoking, but we had got over many 'impassable' places before, by a process amounting to carrying the 'carry-all,' and we hoped to do so again. In fact the danger diminished as we advanced, and the vehicle, lightened as far as was practicable, was conducted safely through the waters upon the disjointed and submerged bridge, while Pourtales and myself waded with all humility after, with the chance of a bite from an old alligator, who we were told had taken his post regularly in the way ever since the rise of the waters, to be on the look out for a windfall. The same day we crossed the Osilla by the ferry, and as the horses were unable to drag the vehicle any further we pushed on to the next farm on foot to procure a relay. We entered upon a fine hilly country; got wet to the skin during a terrible thunder-gust; found miserable quarters about twenty miles from Tallahassee, borrowed a second pair of horses, and finally reached the end of our journey—thoroughly disgusted with travelling in Florida. In this town we had to sit down again for six days, from the sheer impossibility of getting further; and of what we did and what we saw, you shall read in my next letter.

LETTER IV.

TALLAHASSEE, or 'the Old Field of the Indian,' which from its salubrious position, and the fertility of the rich forested tracts around, has been fixed upon as the seat of government of the territory, is situated on the level summit of a hill rising steeply on all sides from the bosom of the forests. The site is a remarkable one. The little town with its regular streets, Capitol, and other public buildings, was gradually increasing in size and population. The latter, at the time of our visit, might have amounted to sixteen hundred souls. The style of building, as may be remarked of the better class of southern erections, is pleasing, and well suited to the climate; they have in general spacious galleries under the spreading roofs, and the boarding and pillars are commonly painted white. We found the place in a state of considerable excitement, from the coming tug of war on some political question being added to the ordinary bustle of this adventuring, speculating, and money-getting race,—and the respective virtues and eligibility of Colonel White, were hourly weighed against those of Colonel Cuff, under the piazza of our hotel.

Once in the week a kind of stage-coach was reported to run northward into Georgia, and as we arrived just after its departure, we had plenty of time on our hands. As to procuring the means of earlier advance either for love or money,—that was utterly out of the question. Indeed we thought ourselves fortunate, when after reading the letters we had received here again and again—preparing answers, of which we were ourselves to be the bearers for some hundred miles to the north; and seeing every thing that was worth looking at; we prevailed upon an emigrant Northumbrian, whose north country twang was a delight to my ears, to lend us his horse Tony, and another 'carry-all;'—one, which only broke down five times before our return, ejecting us on each occasion into the road—to make a day's visit to the ancient port of St. Mark's, some fifteen or sixteen miles off, in the direction of the Gulf. The country immediately about Tallahassee I have described as finely undulating, covered with a growth of exuberant forest. It is so, and so far is much more beautiful than any thing we had seen in East Florida: and this beauty is augmented by numberless fine sheets of water, some of large extent, spreading amongst the hills. A little further to the southward, however, the country sinks down to the ordinary and monotonous level of the barrens, covered with the long-leaved pine, of which we had seen enough to produce complete satiety. Through these we drove to Magnolia, over a road which our canny borderer had described to us as 'a very fairish sort of a road,—one in which the stumps are cut pretty nigh level, that is, within two feet o' the ground!' Here, in a little village on the crystal river Waculla, gliding from its wonderful spring a little higher up the country on its short channel through a belt of splendid woods to the Gulf—we passed two nights, visiting the ulterior object of the excursion, St. Mark's, in the intervening day.

In the latter we were disappointed as elsewhere in Florida. In spite of its long occupancy by the Spaniards, it seems never to have been any thing but a miserable little village; indeed the country in which it lies is of too unhealthy and repulsive a character to admit any other supposition. It is situated among interminable salt marshes, broken by lines of pine and cypress, at the junction of the Waculla and the St. Mark's river; and is separated from the waters of the Gulf by vast beds of grass-covered mud and sand. Only vessels of small burden can approach it and come up to the wharf, while still fewer can advance up to Magnolia. Far from thriving, though now in the hands of the most speculative people on earth, it seems to be going to utter decay, and to be sinking into the slime of its marshes. Here we, two honest, well-meaning gentlemen, travelling for pleasure and instruction, arrived during the panting hours of mid-day, much to the surprise of half a dozen idlers of all shades and bloods lounging near the principal warehouse—the more so, as we appeared walking solemnly after our disjointed ‘carry-all,’ which a quarter of an hour before, had given us our first leap into the road, by the breakage of the pin which keeps the fore and hind wheels in conjunction. After giving it up to the care of the yellow Vulcan of the place, we repaired to the Fort. The present Castellan of this deserted bulwark, which we found garrisoned by nothing but cocks, hens, pigs and rats,—acts as innkeeper, and with his long scarified nose and gaunt Quixotic figure, was in perfect keeping with every thing around him. The position of the Fort was at the extreme angle of the peninsula formed by the converging streams, and within its narrow walls held a crowd of diminutive buildings in an old-fashioned style, with little piazzas and galleries. A kind of Donjon rose at one angle, and from its platform there was a fair look out on the unlovely landscape, and a breezy walk for the cramped-up inhabitants. Every thing was fast tumbling to ruins.

We here spent the sultry hours of noon,—when the summer-day vision which had descended in shape of the two strangers and the ‘carry-all,’ upon the solitary citizens of St. Mark's,—departed, and they saw us no more. Vulcan had finished his job, and made us pay bountifully for what he assured us was a bran new pin, though by its breaking very shortly after, and causing us to commence a series of jumps which did not terminate till we arrived at Tallahassee, we found he had taken us in, by patching the old one.

Magnolia was to us as an oasis in the desert, and we account the two evenings we spent within its shade, as bright spots in our southern tour.

The Waculla arises in one of those extraordinary basins mentioned in a former letter, where the accumulated waters of many subterraneous springs fed by filtrations from the surface through a porous soil, would appear to terminate their dark and hidden wanderings, by gushing to the light. Doubtless this remarkable feature of the Floridas, and the superstitious feeling of the aborigines gave rise to that legend about the 'Fountain of Youth,' believed to exist in this land of wonders, which acted like a spell upon the heated imagination of the early discoverers, and the fruitless search after which forms the last romantic scene of the eventful life of the brave but credulous Ponce de Leon.

The source of the Waculla forms a large circular basin of great diameter, in which the water appears boiling up from a fathomless abyss as colourless as the air itself. No bottom has been found with a line of two hundred fathoms. The stream which runs off to the southward admits of being navigated by boats from the very fountain; and the myriads of fish which frequent these pools, and evidently swarm among their subterraneous channels, are not their least remarkable feature.

At Magnolia, the river glides swiftly through a forest remarkable for beauty of growth, thickness, and variety of timber. The profusion of the splendid *Magnolia grandiflora* has given a name to the village;

and we never met with any elsewhere that could vie with them for size, many being ten or twelve feet in circumference. They were in flower at the time of our visit, and their dark glossy foliage appeared studded with broad white nine-petaled flowers, of a foot in diameter, exhaling the richest perfume in the cool of the evening.

A road had just been hewn into the very recesses of the forest above the village, and revealed its hidden depths to the eye of the passenger. I would fain give you an idea of its features:—of that labyrinth of huge towering trunks rising from the palmetto undergrowth, leafless and branchless for many feet, till woven into a canopy fifty feet above your head;—the long lithe creepers, which, growing with the growth of the tree to which it clung for support, had been borne aloft into the air, and now threw down its tangled pendant ropes from above; the prostrate trunks of the red, or willow oak, or the thorny ash, levelled by the axe or time on your path; and the fan-shaped foliage of the palmetto hanging down from its long shaft.

Here you pass through a jungle where decay is stamped over every object around you: on one side burnt stumps of vast diameter, hollow and blackened like the crater of a miniature volcano. On another trunks of equal volume, mantled with tangled creepers and vines, a fit altar for the Dryads; aud still further, deep dens of rubbish, inexplorable, rotting and falling to dust, the haunt of serpents and unclean birds.

You emerge as the evening advances, and pass through a more open and cheerful part of the forest; and long after the sun has set to you in the depth of the wood,—when the perfume of the magnolia cloys the damp air, and the whip-poor-will has commenced his plaint, the musquito his song, and the fire fly gleams in the shade—you glance up and see the gay sun-beam illuminating the crest of foliage with which the trees are crowned, enlivening a region a hundred feet above you, into which the birds and squirrels ascend, and disport themselves far above the reign of damps and musquitoes. Evening and the nocturnal sounds of the climate you are already acquainted with.

On our return to Tallahassee we found the inhabitants in a state of increasing ferment. The public pulse was considerably above fever heat, owing to a circumstance with which you shall speedily become acquainted.

Just as I have seen at sea, when the swell was rolling one way, an unlucky side-wind would spring suddenly up, and set the waves breaking and counteracting one another, till all was foam and confusion—so it had been with the population of Tallahassee.

Your own reflection will have long ago suggested to you, that among the class of people usually adventuring themselves in any newly-opened part of the Union as first settlers and pioneers, even in a place like this which starts at once from the bosom of the forest, with the title and privileges of a city and seat of Government, those clinging to the strictest rule in matters of religion, good order and morals, must for a while be considered as forming a minority. It cannot be otherwise. Some time may pass before there is a regular place of worship; and a still longer period, before there is any general disposition manifested in the mass of the inhabitants, to maintain among themselves anything like strict moral discipline.

The first step had been taken; and the methodists, the pioneers in religious matters, had set apart a building for the worship of God, where I had heard a good, simple, sound sermon, preached to a thin, but attentive auditory. The second step was in the act of being attempted on the day of our return. This was an attempt on the part of a number of well-meaning inhabitants to institute a Temperance Society. The uproar in consequence was ludicrous beyond description. What between the fire of political debate about Colonels White and Cuff on the one hand, and the hot water poured among them by this ill-advised attempt to recommend temperance, the position of the people of Tallahassee reminded me of that of the inhabitants of the ancient city of Guatemala, which was situated between the Volcan di Fuego, on the right, and the Volcan di Agua on the left, so that they were continually liable to be burnt by the eruptions of the one, or drowned by the deluge of hot water from the other.

A Temperance meeting had been held the preceding evening, at which, as we were informed, great disorder had prevailed, and the mouths of, the advocates in favour of the Society, peremptorily closed. Such was the alarm and indignation evinced by the liquor-venders, loose traders, and tipplers of Tallahassee, and the irritation of feeling against the persons as well as the doctrines of the unfortunate minority in consequence, that the latter seemed quite abashed, and to be taken with their sails aback.

There was a certain Elisha Perkins, a doctor and medicine-vender, who, with an absence of caution, prudence, and foresight, utterly incomprehensible, when it is recollected that he was born and bred a New Englander from Connecticut, had allowed his goose quill to sign the requisition presented to the public by the Temperance committee,—at the same time that he had, as far as his person went, cautiously kept in the back-ground. Upon him, it appeared, that the onus of the whole affair was now laid—in spite of his defence, to which I was a witness, having some business with him at the moment that certain of his friends came to advise and condole with him concerning the hornets' nest he had stirred about his ears. Instead of taking high ground and maintaining it; suffering, if suffer he must, in a good cause, all he said amounted to little more than what Sir Andrew Ague-cheek said upon a somewhat similar occasion, namely, that had he known that the opponents of the measure had been 'so valiant and so cunning in fence,' he would have seen them all drowned, e'er he had meddled with them!

In the course of the afternoon it was proclaimed that a general meeting of the Anti-Temperance inhabitants would take place this evening.

Captain B. our hotel-keeper, immediately came forward in the most handsome manner, and offered the use of his great room for the occasion. How public spirited! I observed that an extra hundred clean tumblers were slily got ready within the bar, in case of their being by any chance needed. A Major Brooks, who was so tipsy he could hardly stand, took some trouble to explain to me, as a stranger, how exceedingly wrong and inadvisedly the adverse party had acted, and the reasons therefore; making many serious remarks upon the folly of drinking to excess; at the same time venturing the opinion that it was foolish to bind oneself never to drink anything but water, as strong liquor might be needful and useful taken medicinally.

Curiosity, idleness, the love of a farce, what you will, made me attentive to the proceedings of the evening.

From the number enrolled under the banners of the Anti-Temperance Society, their general character—and their continual appearance at the bar, where the Captain and his aids were kept incessantly busy for some hours, preparing tumblers of mint-julep, it might be surmised, without any reference to the proceedings within, that the cause of Temperance had, as yet, but few backers in Tallahassee. One or two stout-hearted advocates who stood up in the room, (Perkins, I am sorry to say, was not among them) were silenced by acclamation. The uproar was swelled by all the idle boys of the neighbourhood, who took part with Major Brooks and company; and the numerous windows of the room were filled with a shutter of compact negro heads, with listening ears, glistening eyes, and white rows of bare teeth, delighting in the clamour, and the victorious eloquence of their masters. The last resolution put, and carried unanimously, exhaled the extremity of spite against the person and wares of Elisha Perkins, and may be compressed into the form of a vow,—that all those within and without the room would faithfully abstain from taking the medicines of the said Elisha Perkins, or from following his advice!—a resolution most rapturously received and applauded by the negroes, who yelled, and laughed, and capered with delight, as they retired from their posts at the windows and doors at the termination of the sitting.

As to the rest, it was agreed by the majority of the good people of Tallahassee, to go on drinking and stimulating with mint-julep, mint-sling, bitters, hail-stone, snow-storm, apple-toddy, punch, Tom and Jerry, egg-nogg—and to remain dram-drinkers and tipplers, if not absolute drunkards, in spite of the machinations of the Temperance men. And pray, what is mint-julep? I hear you ask. I've got the receipt in my note-book, —let me see—under the head 'democratic drinks.'— 'Take your mint, fresh and unbruised, and put it in a clean tumbler; pour—' but no! I would rather not tell you, for who knows, if once you get the recipe you may be tempted to set to and make the liquor. And if you once taste it, you will probably make more;—when you are hot to cool you—when you are cold to warm you, and so forth. There must be a peculiar spell about it, for I have seen in America many men of talent, and good sense otherwise, with every reason consequent upon position in life to render them orderly, yet lower themselves and ruin their health by giving way to a vice, which more than any other breeds a loathsome equality between the man of worth and the worthless man. Who knows, that if you get hold of the recipe, instead of being an orderly sober member of society, a loyal subject, and a good Tory; you will get muzzy, and hot-brained, and begin to fret about reform, and democratic forms of government,—doubt your Bible—despise your country—hate your King—fight cocks, and race like a Virginian,—swear profanely like a Western man—covet your neighbours' goods like a Yankee speculator—and end by turning Radical Reformer!

The English have had the character of an intemperate nation, but I trust no longer merit it. The intemperance in the upper and middle classes which was general and winked-at, at the commencement of the century, is no longer to be laid to the charge of either. The national intemperance was of the grossest kind:—granted! and amounted to actual drunkenness. That having been done away with, those classes are certainly clear from the imputation altogether, for dram-drinking has not survived or taken its place; and if you want to see either kind of intemperance, you must descend to the lower ranks. I am not aware if the Temperance Society has done much good amongst us—in America, the good has been already incalculable, for the very reason, that its appeals have been listened to, not by the drinkers to excess, who must always be among the refuse of a population, but by a class who at the same time that they were habitually slaves to excitement from liquor, seldom drank it to inebriety; and that was the mass of the population of every grade, and is still so in some parts of the Union.

In commencing our return to the northward, which we did as soon as it was possible, we were well aware that there was some sore travelling in advance. The roads through the south of Georgia are in the roughest state. The public vehicle which, as it happened, we had all to ourselves, rattled however over the country, when practicable, at the heels of a pair of stout young horses, from stage to stage, with a good-will and rapidity, which would have been very satisfactory, had the impediments in the roads and in the state of the crazy carriage permitted constant advance; but we only reached Milledgeville, the capital of Georgia, after three days and nights incessant travel, and that after a goodly proportion of break-downs, and stick-fasts, besides having to wade many deep creeks, and swim one or two.

The streams were all flooded, and ferries and bridges were seldom seen. Indeed I would rather take my chance for a swim than pass the rocking and fearful erections which, under that name, span many of the deep rivers on the road nearer the coast, and however rotten, are seldom repaired till some fatal accident renders the repair imperative. Yet the coolness with which the coachman, after halting for a moment on the edge of the steep broken declivity, and craning forward, to look at the stream in advance, broad, muddy, and rapid, running like a mill-race, will then plunge into it with his horses, descending down till the water covers their backs, is admirable. On these occasions we always thought that a preparation for a swim was no sign of cowardice, and made our precautions accordingly. From all this you may gather that travelling in the South is still in its infancy, and I may add shamefully expensive. You pay exorbitantly for the meanest fare.

Of the scenery I need say but little. A great proportion of our route lay over an uninteresting pine-covered country; but there were frequent towns springing up along the line, which will doubtless become more and more frequented. But the names! what do you say to Suspendersville? How euphonious! In nothing have our American neighbours shown such an utter absence of any thing like propriety and good taste, as in the hideous nomenclature of towns and villages, with which they have disfigured their maps and their language. It may well be allowed that the difficulty of finding a hundred thousand distinct and melodious appellatives for their new creations was one of no ordinary magnitude. That is true. Yet how many of the ancient Indian names with their harmoous syllables have been thrown aside to make room for the most absurd titles. Hundreds of the former might have been retained in the place of those hideous compounds of undignified patronymics with Greek, Gothic, or Latin affixes, which have been, and still are the fashion.

I have stumbled upon Suspendersville, because it was one of the prettiest places on our road; but though it were a paradise, what poet dare weave its beauties into a lay?

In its neighbourhood we passed over the track of one of those tremendous gusts, or flaws of wind, to which the south is incident. It had occurred two months before, and lasted only four minutes, during which time it laid open a broad pathway through the forests, upon which lay endless rows of huge pines and other trees, uprooted and broken. In the same manner we had seen a tract in the neighbourhood of Black River, South Carolina, upon which were piled thousands of noble trees, all lying from east to west with the roots high in the air, the work of a great 'flaw' in September, 1822. That had lasted four hours, and the loss of life and property during that period, particularly along the coast, was very great. Our informant pointed out to us the very spot in the forests where he and his four horses had taken refuge on an open meadow of a few acres, during these terrible hours of darkness, for it was during the night. He described the sounds in the forest, and in the neighbouring swamps as the most fearful and tremendous that could be conceived, and confessed that towards the termination of the time his brain began to turn with fatigue, exhaustion, and terror. Just before the tempest ceased, the wind veered, and blew from the east with incredible force.

The soil throughout Georgia, and indeed through the whole range of country from Maryland southward, is of a deep red. Towards Milledgeville, the plantations became more numerous, and appeared well cultivated, producing maize, wheat, cotton, and barley. The seat of Government above-named, is pleasantly situated in an undulating country, on the upper branch of the Alatamaha river, and considerable taste reigns in the style of architecture adopted, and in the interspersion of fine trees among the dwellings. A State Convention summoned for the purpose of revising the Constitution, was just in the act of opening its sessions. With regard to these Conventions, we found that there were very diverse opinions held by different individuals; many urging, that, as an assembly of men elected with carelessness, acting without check, superseding all law, and in fact taking the place of the original framers of the Constitution of the State,—they were more likely to do harm than good, and that it was always a matter of thankfulness when they dispersed without having done any great mischief. Others would say—that besides the acknowledged necessity of an occasional revision of the Constitution, the Conventions have this advantage, that many eminent men and servants of the State, whom distaste to a life of constant political warfare had sent into retirement, are induced on such occasions to come forward, and give the country the aid of their matured experience.

The proceedings of the Convention I am unable to detail, as we resumed our route the following morning.

In peeping in upon the proceedings of retired courts of justice, or listening to the harangues delivered right and left for political purposes, by the public men of the United States, whether on the stump or in the senate, the Englishman cannot but be struck with the general diffusion throughout the United States of that gift usually called the 'gift of the gab.' Nothing can be more provoking than the fluency of the country lawyers in spite of their shabby coats: and to one who would be inclined to consider quantity rather than quality, their unhesitating delivery, command of language, and long-windedness, might indeed be a subject of envy. But a little attention will show him, that sound and sense are not always companions. He will detect innumerable expletives—sentences without legitimate beginning or end—deductions from nothing—big words meaning little, and out of place, leading to the most astounding examples of bathos—digressions without end—and, after all, that to extract sense and facts from that wholesale production of words, he must patiently sit down like a searcher after gold dust, and sift bushel after bushel of sand to find the ore. He will find even in the style of eloquence in vogue among the majority of the members of the supreme courts of the country, the same sacrifice of dignity and simplicity evident.

That the people of the United States should be sanguine about the durability of their institutions, is not to be wondered at. They do not allow the justice of an appeal to the history of the past in Europe, to prove the probable mutability of their governments—because they are in their youth, and have, they believe, set out on a more excellent principle and under more favourable circumstances than any people since the world began.

They conceive the doubts which pass the lips of a foreigner to originate in prejudice and jealousy. As to the apparent, and I believe real aptitude of their form of government to the present circumstances of the country and the people, that appears evident; and attached as I may well be to the monarchical form of my own country, finding a great deal in both my Bible and in the book of the world's history, that would incline me to doubt their wisdom or ultimate success; and thinking it their misfortune that circumstances have deprived them and their children of that class of noble feelings and impulses which unite a people to its prince; I am far from expecting or wishing to see the day when they may have a king among them, however some might whisper the probability. By the bye, even among themselves I have seen those who considered the conduct of the honest-hearted and straight-forward officer at present at the head of their executive, as little better than despotism, and it appeared that not a few among them expected to hear of the worthy General doffing his beaver for a kingly crown, or perhaps that he had even begun to exercise the right divine, and touch for the king's evil.

It is not merely because their government is a democratic republic, that I think it liable to change, or to pass away—but because it is one of human institution, and as such the seeds of mutability are within its bosom. It is but an experiment, and that it is such will be seen more and more. Meanwhile it is one which is interesting to all the world, and to none more so than to Britain, from which country they have mainly sprung, from whom they inherit all that energy of mind which is making their name respected and renowned among nations; and, instead of throwing straws in their way, we should stand by and see fair play, interested as we must be as men and Christians in the working of a machine upon the ultimate perfection of whose complicated parts the well-being and happiness of millions of our fellow-creatures are dependant. At the same time, God forbid that we should ever be mad enough to fancy that their systems are fit for our imitation.

If a government formed upon a Republican model does not succeed there—surely, the question of its suitableness to the state of mankind as they are, should be considered as determined for ever. But it must occur to every one, that the United States of America have not only to combat the difficulties which may arise within their own bosom, of which there will be many before the lapse of many years,—but also those that menace them from without. Will they not, more or less, be influenced by the spirit of the times. They are separated from the Old World by the vast ocean, but they are not without the influence of the vortex; every thing, their language, literature, necessities, increasing facility of communication with Europe, all render them intimately connected with us. We whirl, they whirl too. Do we feel the revolution which is taking place in every thing—politics—religious opinion—science—so must they. There may be this difference, that as yet they have more room, the sweep is a wider one than our's, but they still obey the same law as ourselves.

As to the party questions of the moment, what are they ?—they come, they agitate, they pass—and the interest which they excite passes also. A few years, or even months, will shew men admitting principles and the necessity of movements, which, a brief time before, they would have shed their blood to have denied or prevented. The idea of the possibility of disunion was scouted by the majority of Americans in the winter of 1832-3, with abhorrence; and a few months after the question is calmly discussed, and thousands grant not only the possibility, but the probability of its some day taking place.

But what is that ? One may look beyond the present moment, and believe, that though the Great Tree of the West may have many branches, and even that some may rot and fall off,—though she may be shaken by many a blast, and have her leaves prematurely scattered to the wind,—yet her roots are deep in the soil, and there is that health in her which will make her last and endure, if it be God's will. She overshadows a land which no man can pass over from east to west, and from the north to the south, without bringing away the impression, that if on any part of His earthly creation, the finger of God has drawn characters which would seem to indicate the seat of empire,—surely it is there!

To resume our journey; at this town we got into the great line of interior communication between the Southern States, and took advantage of the Piedmont line of stages, to move northward to the frontiers of North Carolina, where we turned aside with the purpose of crossing the Alleghany to Knoxville, in Tennessee. Why we did not, you shall hear presently.

The upper part of Georgia and South Carolina are interesting, from the interchange of wild and cultivated scenery, and the country about Washington is eminently beautiful and diversified by hill and dale. Otherwise throughout the earlier inhabited parts of the South, you are struck with the vast tracts of exhausted and impoverished land, lying bare and open to the action of the rains. The town of Abbeville is considered as the centre of one of the richest tracts in the South, the whole of which is in a state of excellent cultivation. We left the Gold Region far to the left. There five thousand people were already collected, grasping and quarrelling, and it is probable that more gold will be sown than reaped.

After quitting the Piedmont route, every step to the Westward gave indication of our approach to the mountains. A little beyond the town of Greenville, you come upon the first spurs of the Blue Ridge, and entering the valley of the Saluda, are led more and more into the bosom of the hills. To these upper vallies, many of which are under high cultivation, and that is all that is wanting to make the highlands of the Carolina and Virginia a lovely region,—thousands of the inhabitants of the Atlantic border, flock during the stifling heats of summer, to escape the pestilential airs of the swamps and salt marshes. Here they have sweet green fields, dense shade, and fresh mountain-springs and breezes. Numerous mineral waters are not wanting for those who may fancy they are the better for them.

As I may have remarked elsewhere, there is almost a total absence of bare rock in these mountains, and though frequently very steep, their ridges and acclivities all appear clothed in the most luxuriant forests.

I can assure you we felt the charms of this country after our sultry, thirsty, and often painful passage of the pine barrens of Florida and Georgia ; and we pressed forward towards the heights with delight along the side of the fresh river, meandering through the uplands, along vales filled with wheat; or sweeping over bare slabs of slate rock in the deep glens nestled in the hills. We had got far from the region of the orange, the magnolia, and the palmetto; but the perfume of the sweet-briar was yet more delightful, and nothing could be more splendid than the magnificent red, white, and yellow azaleas which gemmed the deep green forest, besides the tall and shapely *Liriodendron*, the tulip tree, covered with its gaudy cups, and the white-clustered flowers of the acacia hanging over the stream.

The same impediment from floods which had attended us during the whole of our southern tour, was destined to cause disappointment and delay to the very hour of our return to the Potomac.

The news that greeted us on our gaining Flat Rock on the west side of the Alleghany, was most discouraging. We had intended to proceed across the other ridges of the Apallachian chain, by the passage apparently burst through them by the French-Broad river, a tributary of the Tennessee. But on our arrival at the town of Ashville, all reports confirmed the previous rumour of its being impassable. However, after a day's halt, we persevered, and got forward through a most romantic defile, shut in by forested mountains, to the Warm Spring, but there found ourselves caught in a trap, and neither able to retrace our steps nor proceed. Our advance thus far over a road, exposed to the overflow of the foaming river, in immediate proximity to which it was confined by impending rocks, had been to a certain degree accompanied by danger; and the continued rise of the river made the road above, as well as below, perfectly impracticable.

We were detained here three days in the very heart of the mountains, and when we were enabled to make our escape, we did it by the first road that opened. This led us towards that line of the interior hills called the Bald-Range to Jonesboro', and Bluntsville, where we fell into the great route between Tennessee and Virginia, and proceeded to Abingdon in the latter State. Thence passing the head-waters of the Kenawha, and recrossing the Blue Ridge, which in this part of the chain is the great division of the eastern and western waters, we descended upon the upper streams of the Roanoake, passed through the beautiful vale of Fotheringay, shut out from the world, and gained the large and flourishing town of Lynchburg. Our plans would have led us to turn aside to the Peaks of Otter, the Natural Bridge, and the valley of the Shenandoah; but the floods on all sides rendered it an impossibility, and left no road but that of Richmond open, to which we betook ourselves and reached that city after two months absence. The flooded state of the Pamunky again interposed an obstacle in our overland journey towards Washington, but this too was overcome by a little hardihood, and we found ourselves once more, by the close of May, among our friends in Baltimore, and at the end of what we might well call, a chapter of disappointments.

LETTER V.

Among the shorter excursions made during the summer of this year, was one from Baltimore to the seat of the State Legislature of Pennsylvania at Harrisburg, proceeding from thence through the interior of the State to New York. These parts of Pennsylvania exhibits a rich undulating surface, generally under most careful cultivation, watered by many streams, and inhabited in a great measure by a population of German descent. The people still maintain in their language and customs, much that appertains to the land of their forefathers. You travel among their verdant farms, enter their substantial houses, most of which are both handsome and commodious, painted in foreign style, and overshadowed by aged willows; you see the spacious and solidly-constructed barns, and on every hand you meet with that which transports you in fancy, back to the fields of Germany. These Pennsylvanians are both a steady and a careful people. Their advance in the scale of improvement is slow but gradual; they resist innovation; read the Bible, the Almanack, and one newspaper: now and then send to consult the compiler of the latter whether they may venture to cut their crops or no; and stick to old creeds and old habits. Probably of all the various races which form the population of the Union, they are the least exposed to that constant irritation from the fierce discussion of political questions of momentary importance, which agitates the rest of the community from one end of the year to the other; and which to me, appears one of the greatest miseries which their form of government entails upon the people of the Union. They study to be quiet and mind their own business; speak a most amusing mixture of English and German; keep the Yankees out of their borders as well as they may; complain bitterly of the disorders of their swearing and grog-drinking Irish neighbours; always build a bake-house just before the door; eat sausages, sour-krout, and biscuits; rejoice in baked-meats and sweet-meats; and make fortunes in every part of the Union by the exercise of their gift of sugar-baking and their skill in confectionary. They toil steadily for years, please the palates and spoil the stomachs of their customers in the South and North, till enabled by ample gains to return and enjoy their ease in their native State. They supply the Philadelphia market with the richest produce of the farm; erect huge sign-posts before their little inns, exhibiting most egregious portraits of Lafayette, General Jackson, and Solomon, larger than life; and certainly are, with all their oddities, the staff and the pride of their beautiful State.

I wish you could see on a summer evening, the bright silver surface of the noble Susquehanna, —the largest tributary of the Atlantic on the northern continent south of the St. Lawrence,—gliding among these beautiful farms from the mountains to the Chesapeake; here expanded to the width of miles, with its thickly-wooded islands floating on the surface, reflecting the frequent towns and villages and the orchards on its banks; or contracted to the breadth of a mile at its rapids, between shores thick set with chesnut, sumac, and black walnut, labyrinths of rocks, trees, and bowers of vines, and creepers, forming scenes worthy of Gertrude's home,—or spend a tranquil evening, as I did, in the groves of Duncan's Island, within the gates of the Blue Ridge, near the mouth of the Juniatta, listening to the murmur of the rivers, or the song of the mocking-bird.

Harrisburg is well situated upon the banks of the Susquehanna, a few miles below the point where the river escapes into the undulating country to the east of the mountains, through a gap, greatly resembling that below the Rhine at Andernach. For the style of building, the trade and commerce, and number of inhabitants, &c, I refer you to Flint, or any other wholesale describer of towns and counties in the Union. I have alluded to it particularly, for the purpose of introducing you to one feature of this new country, which may well be ranked among its wonders, namely, the bridges. Great as are the marvels which human skill and human hardihood have wrought, and are every day producing in this country, there are few more striking than those of this class, even to such as from childhood have been rendered familiar with the aspect of those solid and beautiful structures which span the river of our great metropolis. For length, hardihood of plan, and solidity of construction, though timber replaces stone, the bridges which you meet with on the Susquehanna, and other great rivers of the Atlantic coast, are wonders of art. I give you the dimensions of two works of this character, which I examined on this trip. The Susquehanna at Harrisburg, is a mile in breadth, divided into two channels by Turkey Island, containing about sixty acres of arable land and peach orchards. The bridge is divided into two equal portions, similar in construction. Each is comprised of six arches of 230 feet span, resting on five piers. The roadway is thirty-five feet broad, and contains two ample carriage and foot-ways, forty feet above low water mark. It was erected from 1813 to 1817, and cost 192,188 dollars. The whole is constructed with great solidity, and covered with a substantial roof.

A few miles higher up the river, in following the canal which has been constructed to maintain an uninterrupted communication by water with the interior of the country, whenever the beds of the rivers are obstructed by rapids; you meet with similar proofs of that hardihood of conception, and the spirit of internal improvement, for which the northern and middle States are so much distinguished.

After advancing up the left bank of the river through the Gap as far as Petersburg, the canal is there brought to a conclusion; and the boats, by the following ingenious contrivance, pass over a branch of the river 2231 feet in breadth. A dam, nine feet in height has been built across the river parallel to a bridge resting upon nine piers, and constructed upon the lattice principle, which furnishes a towing path and double carriage road to Duncan's Island; and in the still water created by this dam, the canal on the left bank terminates, and that on the island commences. Proceeding, you find that the island is connected with the left bank of the Juniatta which comes in from a deep wooded glen to the westward, and with the right of the Susquehanna, by a strong embankment traversing the smaller branch of the latter, over which the canal crosses, and then divides into two branches. The one proceeds up the main valley, and the other, conducted across the Juniatta by an aqueduct seven hundred feet in length, proceeds up the valley of the same into the interior of the country. But these are only two works among many displaying the same genius and the same boldness; and gigantic as they are, they are by no means the largest of the class.

It has been the fashion to express a doubt whether America will distinguish herself in the fine arts, and in the higher departments of literature. As to genius, surely no one will pretend to say that that rich and noble grain, sparingly sown as it is in any part of the globe, may not spring up on the soil of the Western world. The question is rather whether the people of the United

States possess among themselves the power of fostering and nurturing genius, or whether the character of the people, their style of education and habits, are inimical to its growth. Genius is of no particular clime, and though a taste for the fine arts, and the power of estimating and appreciating it, is more inherent in one people than another; it will frequently spring up and thrive where least expected. What will retard the growth of real talent in America more than any thing, and prevent its soaring in many instances above mediocrity,—smothering it in the bud,—will be false praise, false standards of excellence, and a compliance with the vitiated taste and models of the age. There exists not a young aspirant to talent of whatever description, who cannot find a coterie both willing and ready to praise and flatter; and where this poison is administered to a young mind, removed from the opportunities of making comparison between his own works and those of real and mature excellence, its bad effect is commonly irretrievably destructive of future and justly merited distinction. It will be a misfortune for America, whatever she may think, if she encourages a disposition in her sons to look no further than themselves for their standard of excellence in literature and in the arts, as well as in politics.

In the change effected in the style of education of late years in many parts of Europe, the people of the United States have shared to a certain degree, and, comparatively speaking, education is there also conducted with undue haste, and ends in the acquisition of superficial knowledge. Our forefathers may have been mistaken in their systems of education, and it would be absurd to say, that the practice pursued in the universities and schools of Europe, was faultless. Fifteen years ago, you and I thought—and naturally so, as we were both boys, hating application,—that the time spent upon the classics, and the abstruser branches of mathematics, was lost to all intents and purposes, especially in cases where the future course marked out for the boy led him away from their application in after life; but we may both think otherwise now,—and find reason to doubt, whether, after all, the old way was not based on the sounder judgment and truer philosophy. The present spirit of the world, the temper of mankind, the style of literature of the present day, the decay of the reasoning powers, and the growth of those of the imagination; the production of innumerable works of fancy, of fiction, of local interest; the unblushing manner in which men 'lard their lean books with the fat of others' works,' all prove that there is a disposition to deteriorate. Who writes now for posterity? Who submits to the toil necessary for the production of classical works? Who can be made to believe that however a man may possess the power of rapid production of ideas, it is toil, labour, and patience alone which will enable him to attain perfection? No! a petty name among a chosen coterie, blind as ourselves, is all we aim at now, and poor indeed must be the claims of that author whose works neither procure him cash nor compliments.

With regard to the people of the United States, it is a great pity that among the many solid excellences which they have inherited from British blood, a general and decided taste for, and appreciation of the fine arts cannot be included. In England, I believe, taste, however affected at the present day, is, where it exists, acquired in the generality of cases. A love of music, painting, statuary, architecture; an eye for harmonious proportion and form amongst us, is as foreign to the minds of thousands in the educated classes as it is generally observable in all ranks of society in Italy. As far as their tastes are deducible from the parent country then, the Americans are under a disadvantage; and many Europeans are inclined to surmise that they labour under one equally great, from the style of education, interior construction of society, and habits of the people; but foreigners may cavil and prophesy, and Americans may arrogate what they do not yet possess:—Time alone will show!—America has apparently her race to run, and may appeal to her vigorous and herculean youth for promise of a distinguished future.

As to American authors, who for number and variety begin to vie with those of any country in Europe, many remarks from me would be out of place. I could name divers, perhaps hardly known in England, whose works in their several branches of science or literature, should command respect among the generations that be; and at least, whatever posterity may say to them, claim quite as favourable a doom as some hundreds among us, whom fashion and the reviews combine to praise.

The great demand for works of fiction inundates the American continent with a flood of poems and romances from her own press; besides the numberless reprints of good, bad, and indifferent, from ours. So far as America plays the pander to the vitiated style and taste, which is a disease of the age in Europe, so far may she have to partake of the punishment and the cure, whatever it may be, and whenever it comes.

In natural history and philosophy, theology, mechanics, travels, divers works have been lately written of great merit.

There is one class of writers, which I am glad to believe is going rather out of vogue; these are the so-called 'truly American writers,' and among them, there are men of both wit and talent, both of which would be of more value, if taste were added.

From the perusal of the works whose authors were distinguished by this epithet, I have been inclined to suspect that to be a 'truly American author,' it was necessary not only to show an extreme predilection and fondness for their native country, its history, its institutions—to see the past enveloped in a mist of glory, and the future veiled in a golden dust of prophetic anticipation, but also an anxiety to invent occasions for a palatable sneer at Old England. A 'truly American author' evidently speculates a little upon the low passions of revenge, and jealousy, in the breasts of such of his countrymen as may yet harbour them, and seeks occasion to flatter the same. Having perhaps specified in his contract with his bookseller, that there should be a certain quantum of anti-anglican matter in every literary offspring; he exacts from his brain the invention of proper occasions for the introduction of a poor innocent John Bull, decently attired in corduroys and top boots, whose real business in the work is extremely doubtful and enigmatical. Here he figures of course to very indifferent advantage, furnishing the writer, however, with the convenient means of exposing cherished prejudices and ignorance. If this is to be a 'truly American writer,' and the reviler of America on our side, called the 'truly English writer,' the sooner both die out the better. I hope we live to better ends than to perpetuate hatred and prejudice.

But this is all by the bye, or 'apropos,' as it is the fashion to say, when you get off the road into the ditch. I was going to remark, that whether it is in the fine arts that America is to distinguish herself or not, there can be no doubt but in the mechanic arts she will attain great excellence. Of that, every thing gives promise; and the very circumstances which would seem to be against her in her cultivation of the former, are highly conducive to her advance, and perfection in the latter. Travel where you will, through the middle and eastern states, you see tokens of a busy spirit of emulative ingenuity, boldness of design and conception in every branch of mechanics, from the lowest to the highest, which must command admiration. To this the absence of monopolies—the incessant call for exertion and emulation—the vastness of the public works are all favourable. The advantage of having given birth to more than one striking and original genius in naval architecture, and the natural bias of the people to commerce, kept alive by success, and by the jealous rivalry with England, and between their own companies of merchants and owners of packets,—has covered their coasts with innumerable vessels of every class, the aptitude of which for the purposes of their erection, is only to be equalled by the symmetry of proportion and beauty of appearance for which they are distinguished. The steam-vessel contain abundant proofs of this mechanical talent in every part of its details. From the bridges—water-works—rail-roads—docks and public works of every description, down through the countless number of aids to human comfort, to the very mouse-trap, you detect the prevalence of this same busy ingenuity and talent. And there is no reason to believe it will not increase with the growth of the country.

I have, at the commencement of this letter, alluded to my visit to the German part of Pennsylvania. Circumstances not worth explaining here, led me also to make a winter and a summer excursion to another part of the Union, where there was more, perhaps than in any other to the South of Long Island, to remind me of 'merry England.'

You are aware that the Swedes had in very early times attempted to settle colonies on the shores of the Delaware, much to the discomfort of their Dutch rivals here and on the waters of New York.

They seem to have made choice of the rich low tracts of land on either side of that deep Bay; to have built their little forts, mounted their few pieces of cannon, and sat down with the best will in the world to sow and reap, in spite of the bites of the musquitoes and the grumbling of their neighbours. They were a hardy persevering race—but had to yield to British rule in process of time; and here their descendants are still distinguishable among the inhabitants of New Jersey and Delaware. In spite of their monotony and low situation, there is something in the settled appearance and steady cultivation observable in these parts which is truly delightful, after the eye has become satiated for the time with the unfinished, raw, and unpoetic features of the scarcely reclaimed surface of the country.

Cross the Delaware for instance, either from Newcastle, near the site of Fort Casimir, or from Delaware City, and enter the mouth of Salem Creek, brim-full, winding like a snake to and fro among the level, green, grassy meadows:—somewhere at the entrance, among the tall rank grass, where now you see the marsh blackbird disporting himself with his gay epaulettes, stood, in the old times to which I had alluded, the redoubted Fort Elsinbourg; called at a latter time Fort Moschettoesburg, from the fact that the musquitoes did what the Dutch could not do; that is, drive out the garrison and make them seek another point to defend. I have searched for its site in vain, along the low shores of the Delaware. The plough has passed over it.

Some few miles up the creek lies Salem, a snug little, out-of-the-way town—the market of a rich and widely-cultivated tract; with a goodly number of substantial families of Swedish and English descent, all able to trace their genealogy up for a dozen generations, dwelling in the houses their forefathers built, cultivating their farms, and adding yearly to their breadth of territory, by land reclaimed from the Bay, or by soil scratched from its depths. Here and there in the vicinity, on the borders of clumps of forest, abounding with sweet-gum, oak, and maple, you stumble upon grey substantial mansions, built a century and a half ago, of imported brick, and in the fashion of the mother countries;—with the date of erection, and many a diamond-shaped ornament depicted on the gable-ends in glazed brick. Round them poplars, and willows, and orchards, where rows of aged trees overshadow the dark green sod, give further token of a long period of quiet.

In the town itself, with its neat rows of comfortable brick or clap-board houses, there is an air of comfort and repose very unusual in the country in general. Roses and honeysuckles and jessamines, garland the tidy door-ways, which often open immediately upon clean carpeted parlours. Between the dwellings are interposed many a pretty garden and orchard; and the bricked pavements in front are shaded by rows of fine acacia, willows, and sycamore. On every side, as before remarked, you see much to remind you of England, and I may yet mention the little old village church,[1] standing apart, surrounded by decent tombstones, with a porch covered with the beautiful trumpet-flower; and though last, not least, the number of bright-faced children with blue eyes and flaxen hair.

In the demeanour of the inhabitants there is much of that homely, hearty simplicity found in spots removed out of the immediate influence of the vortex of the world. Hospitality and frank good sense are met with in every house. The few families of Swedish descent had degenerated, it is said for many years, in consequence of intermarrying from time immemorial, till fortunately an old gentleman died very rich, left a will about which there arose an interminable law-suit; and from that time the deadly feud which ensued, forced the young men and maidens to begin to marry without the pale, and the race regained its pristine strength and beauty.

I find among my papers, one upon the difference of the rural sights and rural sounds in England and those in the United States, which might have had a claim upon your interest; but I find that I have already compressed into one or another of these letters, the main portion of the observations which it contains.

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[1] Built many years ago by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, in London; and lately repaired after a long period of disuse and neglect.

You are aware that I paid some little attention, however superficial, to the entomology of America, and in connection with it I am tempted to give you an account of a phenomenon of which I esteem myself fortunate to have been an eye-witness.

There are few among the insect tribes of Europe, capable of producing sounds of any volume. The hum of bees and wasps, the buzzing of innumerable small flies, the piping of the gnat, the chirp of the grasshopper, the cry of the cricket, the tick of the death-watch—are the greater number of those an Englishman would enumerate. In southern Europe sounds are added sharper, louder, and more incessant, and I remember having been both amused and astonished, by the effect produced by the mole-crickets of France and the Jura, and yet more by the *cicada* of Italy, as, sitting among the thick foliage of the Roman pine, they would fill the ear of the panting traveller for minutes before he reached the place of their luxurious enjoyment.

But what are these scattered and solitary sounds, to the din which fills the ear at certain times and seasons from the insect tribes in the Transatlantic forest or swamp? The main agents in its production are nevertheless members of the same families of gryllus and cicada. The latter consists of many species, and affords some of the most laborious and successful musicians among the insect tribes. Every traveller has dilated upon the singular effect produced by one of them called the Catydid, as, sitting in little coteries among the trees, they fill the ear of night with their sharp and incessant wrangling ; and my notice regards at present one of the same family.

When we returned from Mexico to the United States in the summer of last year, 1834, among many points of interest, political, domestic, and foreign, which our re-entrance into the high-road of civilization brought to our ears, was the fact that this was the 'locust year.'

The observation of a past century had shown the inhabitants of Pennsylvania and Maryland, that every seventeenth year they were visited by a countless horde of insects of the cicada tribe, hence called *Septendecim*, distinct in aspect and habits from those whose annual appearance and mode of life were understood. Though of a different tribe, and with perfectly different habits from the locust of the East (*gryllus migratorius*) the fact of its occasional appearance, as though by magic, in such vast swarms, had caused it to be familiarly alluded to by that name. Its last appearance had been in 1817, and its re-appearance was thus confidently predicted for the third or fourth week in May this year.[1]

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[1] The following is a list of the dates of the appearance of the Cicada, or Tettigonia Septendecim, published in 1817.

It appeared in 1749 in May.
——————— 1766—it came out of the earth from the 14th to the 16th of May.
——————— 1783—from the 16th to the 19th of May.
——————— 1800—from the 19th to the 26th of May.
——————— 1817—from the 26th of May to the beginning of June.

Nature, true to her impulses, and the laws by which she is so mysteriously governed, did not fail to fulfil the prediction. On the 24th of May and following day, the whole surface of the country in and about the city of Philadelphia, suddenly teemed with this singular insect. The subject interested me, and as during these days I had every opportunity of being daily, I may say hourly, attentive to the phenomena connected with it, both here and in Maryland, I send you the result of my observations.

The first day of their appearance, their numbers were comparatively few,—the second they came by myriads; and yet a day or two might pass before they reached their full number. I happened to be abroad the bright sunny morning which might be called the day of their birth. At early morning, the insect, in the pupa state, may be observed issuing from the earth in every direction, by the help of a set of strongly barbed claws on the fore legs. Its colour is then of a uniform dull brown, and it strongly resembles the perfect insect in form, excepting the absence of wings, ornament, and antennæ. The first impulse of the imperfect insect, on detaching itself from its grave, is to ascend a few inches, or even feet, up the trunks of trees, at the foot of which their holes appear in the greatest number; or upon the rail fences which are soon thickly sprinkled with them. In these positions they straightway fix themselves firmly by their barbed claws. Half an hour's observation will then show you the next change which is to be undergone. A split takes place upon the shell, down from the back of the head to the commencement of the rings of the abdomen, and the labour of self-extrication follows. With many a throe and many a strain, you see the tail and hind legs appear through the rent, then the wings extricate themselves painfully from a little case in the outer shell, in which they lie exquisitely folded up, but do not yet unfurl themselves;—and lastly, the head, with its antennæ, disengages itself, and you behold before you the new-born insect freed from its prison. The slough is not disengaged, but remains firmly fixed in the fibres of the wood; and the insect, languidly crawling a few inches, remains as it were in a dose of wonder and astonishment. It is rather under an inch in length, and appears humid and tender; the colours are dull, the eye glazed, the legs feeble, and the wings for a while after they are opened, appear crumpled and unelastic. All this passes before the sun has gained his full strength. As the day advances, the colours of the insect become more lively: the wings attain their full stretch, and the body dries and is braced up for its future little life of activity and enjoyment.

Between ten and eleven, the newly-risen tribes begin to tune their instruments; you become conscious of a sound, filling the air far and wide, different from the ordinary ones which may meet your ear. A low distinct hum salutes you, turn where you will. It may be compared to the simmering of an enormous cauldron,—it swells, imperceptibly changes its character, and becomes fuller and sharper —thousands seem to join in, and by an hour after mid-day, the whole country far and wide rings with the unwonted sound. The insects are now seen lodged in or flying about the foliage above: a few hours having been thus sufficient to give them full strength and activity, and bring them into full voice.

Well may the school-boy and the young curly-headed negro rejoice at the sound, for their hands will never want a play-thing for many days to come. Well may the birds of the forest rejoice, for this is the season of plenty for them—the pigs and poultry too, they fatten on the innumerable swarms which before many days will cover the ground in the decline of their strength.

The pretty insect, for it is truly such, with its dark body, red eyes, and its glassy wings interlaced by bright yellow fibres—enjoys but a little week; and that merry harping which pervades creation from sun-rise to sun-down, for the time of its continuance, is but of some six days duration. Its character would be almost impossible to describe, though it rings in my ears every time I think of the insect. Like all those of its tribe, the sound produced is not a voice, but a strong vibration of musical chords produced by the action of internal muscles upon a species of lyre, or elastic membrane, covered with net-work, and situated under the wings, the action of which I have often witnessed. The female insect may utter a faint sound, but how I do not know—it is the male who is endowed with the powerful means of instrumentation which I have described. Though the sound is generally even and continuous as long as the insect is uninterrupted, yet there is a droll variety observable at times—but what it expresses, whether peculiar satisfaction or jealousy, or what other passion, I cannot divine. It has been well described by the word *Pha———ro!* the first syllable being long and sustained, and connected with the second, which is pitched nearly an octavo lower, by a drawling *smorzando* descent.

During the whole period of their existence, the closest attention does not detect their eating any thing: and with the exception of the trifling injury received by the trees consequent upon the process observed by the female in laying her eggs—which I will describe immediately, they are perfectly innoxious. The end to which they seem to be sent to the upper day is purely confined to the propagation of their species. A few days after their first appearance, the female begins to lay her eggs. She is furnished with an ovapositor situated in a sheath on the abdomen, composed of two serrated hard parallel spines, which she has the power of working with an alternate perpendicular motion. When her time comes, she selects of the outermost twigs of the forest trees or shrubs, and sets to work and makes a series of longitudinal jagged incisions in the tender bark and wood. In each of these she lays a row of tiny eggs, and then goes to work again. Having deposited to her heart's content, she crawls up the twig a few inches yet further from the termination, and placing herself in a fitting position, makes two or three perpendicular cuts into the very pith. Her duty is now terminated. Both male and female become weak; — the former ceases to be tuneful; the charm of their existence is at an end; they pine away, become blind, fall to the ground by myriads, and in ten or fifteen days after their first appearance, they all perish. Not so, however, their seed. The perforated twigs die, the first wind breaks them from the tree, and scatters them upon the ground. The eggs give birth to a number of small grubs, which are thus enabled to attain the mould without injury; and in it they disappear digging their way down into the bosom of the earth. Year goes after year—summer after summer, the sun shines in vain to them—they 'bide their time!' The recollection of their existence begins to fade: a generation passes away; the surface of the country is altered—lands are reclaimed from the forest—streets are laid out and trampled on for years—houses are built, and pavements hide the soil.

Still though man may almost forget their existence, God does not. What their life is in the long interval none can divine. Traces of them have been found in digging wells and foundations, eight and ten feet under the surface. When seventeen years have gone by, the memory of them returns, and they are expected. A cold, wet spring, may retard their appearance, but never since the attention of man has been directed to them, have they failed—but at the appointed time by one common impulse they rise from the earth, piercing their way through the matted sod, through the hard, trampled clay of the pathways, through the gravel, between the joints of the stones and pavements and into the very cellars of the houses,—like their predecessors, to be a marvel in the land, to sing their blithe song of love and enjoyment under the bright sun, and amidst the verdant landscape; like them to fulfil the brief duties of their species, and close their mysterious existence by death. We are still children in the small measure of our knowledge and comprehension, with regard to the phenomena of the natural world!

All things considered, we may venture to prophesy the reappearance of the Cicada Septendecim on the coasts of Maryland and Virginia for the year 1851.[1]

I may still mention that I took care to ascertain, that all these insects sung in one uniform musical key, and that this key was C sharp!

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[1] There is one surmise, of the truth of which I should wish to be assured, or hear it corrected. The preceding year, 1833, I observed while travelling between Abingdon and Knoxville, in Upper Virginia, the sudden appearance of what appeared to me the same species of Cicada, attended with circumstances of an exactly similar character to those I have been describing. Specimens of both were sent by me to Europe at different times, but I have not had an opportunity of comparing them. Little doubt rests on my own mind, but they were exactly of the same species; and what I should infer from the fact, if true, is, that however exactly the period of their appearance has been ascertained, they may still appear in different parts of the country in different years. But this point careful observation will soon determine.

LETTER VI.

A SHORT but interesting tour in the Canadas, which we effected in the course of the summer, after our return from the South, hurried as it was, may claim a passing notice.

We proceeded by way of Newport and Providence to Boston; and were present in that city at the celebration of the Fourth of July, a day giving rise to more congratulation, feasting, speechifying, and ode-making throughout the Union, than any other in the year. The Americans, hitherto, have in the main made a good use of their Independence, and though I could not feel with them, perhaps I could feel for them, and I participated in their sober gaiety as far as a man who pretends to a few cosmopolitan and philanthropic feelings—but withal calling himself a liege subject of his Majesty, might.

An entire bright summer's day was filled up from morning to night with parades, processions, orations, music, and discharges of artillery. As strangers, we were courteously invited by the Mayor and Corporation, to go to church and hear the annual oration; which I did with edification,—but I eschewed with all civility the evening banquet; and between you and me, I take no inconsiderable share of credit to myself for so doing; for besides the chance of meeting many of the most distinguished men of this State, it is notorious that the public bodies of New England are genuine descendants of the illustrious Common Councils and Corporations of the mother country, and can never get through much business, or feel sufficiently thankful for mercies received, without the aid of first-rate viands.

Order began and closed the day, and if it were left to me to speak according to my impression, I should have said that there was no mob in Boston.

In going northward we visited Nahant, famed as the favourite haunt of the sea-serpent; Lynn, still celebrated for shoes; and Salem, formerly for witchcraft. If it would at all strengthen your belief in the credibility of the existence of a nondescript animal of the serpent order, of huge size, frequenting these seas, to hear me aver, that the proofs, such as they are, resting on testimony which cannot be disproved or set aside, have made me a believer, without having enjoyed ocular demonstration—I have no hesitation in proclaiming myself as one, and that in all sobriety and seriousness. In common with many, I possess that kind of credulity which leads me,—not to believe in the first instance, but to listen to every tale which comes to my ear on respectable authority, and to attempt to trace it to its source; and I would reject nothing, however contrary to probability, till it had been either proved impossible, or founded in complete error. The animal in question has been seen by many of all classes since the 'respectable old whalesman' in 1751 reported its first appearance; and always described as possessing apparently the same form, colour, and characteristics—and though thousands will continue to doubt it, till absolutely caught and exhibited on dry land,—a capture which it is highly incumbent upon the inhabitants of Boston to effect;—there is nothing in the accounts given which surpasses probability. The earth has its monsters rarely seen, and why not the sea? And here I cannot but complain of the hard lot of travellers, from the times of Marco Polo to the present day, that they have not only to get over the difficulty that may exist in their own minds as to belief in an incredible story, but that when this is effected, it is ten to one few thank them, or think the better of them for it, and still fewer are willing to concur heartily in the belief.

Our itinerary would still conduct you near the coasts, through a number of flourishing towns, over the granite beds of New Hampshire, and the sweet scented red and white clover-fields of Maine, to Portland, the capital of that thriving State, the most northerly of the Union.

The Bostonians make a terrible noise about the beauty of their Bay, comparing it with that of Naples, and I do not know what else. Most travellers must feel disappointed with it. The shores and islands are as barren as Orkney,—and we rather argued, that the higher we climbed the coast, the worse it would be. Imagine our surprise and delight, when considerably more than a degree to the northward, we found in the unsung and neglected Portland, scenery which, for variety, beauty, and extent, far exceeded every view of the class in the United States. None can vie with it, no not even New York, though it neither possessed the life nor the colouring of that favourite port.

The town itself, built in a tasty and neat manner, containing twelve thousand inhabitants and ten churches, stands on a narrow peninsula, which rises to a high bluff sea-sward, with a deep bay and wooded shores on either side. From the signal tower and observatory, built on the highest point of the peninsula, the view is perfectly panoramic and extends to the westward and north-east from the misty forms of the White Mountains, distant sixty miles in the interior, to the light-house at the entrance of the Kennebec, thirty-six miles across Casco Bay. The surface of the latter, which forms the outer harbour, appears spotted and broken up into a labyrinth of lakes and islands clothed with wood, of which between three and four hundred lie between Portland and the Kennebec,—of all shapes and sizes, from a rocky islet to those of ten or twelve miles in circumference. The nearer islands, with their pretty shores and forests, enclosing the sheltered roadstead and the various passages between them:—the little forts and light-house, and the shipping passing in or out, form a lovely middle-ground to the eastward, and over them expands the even sea-line of the blue Atlantic. Vessels are descried at the distance of twenty miles from the port, the elevation of the gallery of the observatory being two hundred and thirty-seven feet above the sea.

The view inland is also verdant, varied, and extensive; comprising a wide expanse of forest and open land, interspersed by many villages and farms, and taken as a whole, we deemed this view by far the most enchanting we had met with on the American coast. We had not yet seen Quebec.

From Portland we proceeded to the Kennebec, a beautiful stream, whose banks, like that of its rival to the eastward, the Penobscot, are adorned with many flourishing towns. We ascended its valley to Augusta, the legislative capital of the state, and thence to the termination of the mail routes at Anson. Here, after some little delay, we made arrangements for proceeding fifty miles to the frontier and towards Quebec.

Throughout the Eastern States we had been anew struck with the diligence, cleverness, and moral worth of the population of this part of the Union. All they do is done with an attention to neatness, convenience, a careful regard to economy of time, and an eye to present and future profit.

This feeling of respect had been perhaps increased by the impressions left on the mind from our short tour in the states south of the Potomac—where, even amidst a high-spirited race of inhabitants, there is so little of the active spirit of improvement discernible. Slavery would seem to blight the energies of the master, whatever may be said of the slave. The beautiful villages of New England, her busy manufactures, her noble public works; her successful improvement of all the capabilities of the country—her attention to social order education and religious improvement—her charities and humane institutions—and sound political views, all command admiration and respect.

These are the coasts which furnish the Union with its best and most intrepid mariners, carrying her produce and her flag into every sea and every harbour throughout the globe. Little sloops from these upper ports of the United States under fifty tons burden, and with but three or four hands on board, may be met with thousands of miles from their homes, laden with the produce of their native coasts.

In their spirit of adventure and speculation many a settler loads his small bay-craft with planks and shingles in the spring of the year, and with two or three hands on board, bears away from the coast and runs down to seek a profitable market to the Bahama islands, or even to the Indies, with no aid but a compass. I remember our surprise, at the very height of a terrific storm in the latitude of Cape Hatteras, when the sea was rolling before the gale, and wreathed with foam; and the sky and water seemed mingling in the heavy mist which hung down on the surface—on descrying one of these buoyant little vessels scudding like a spirit through the mingling storm, with steady sail and dry decks towards the distant Bahamas.

At Anson, we were both amused and astonished at seeing a large frame-house march out of the village, by the help of sundry rollers and a long train of sixty oxen—down the hill over a single-arched wooden-bridge one hundred and thirty feet long and forty feet high, directly over a boiling fall of the river, up the next hill, and out of sight, to its new location, upwards of a mile distant, where its better half had already preceded it. This was Yankeeism to some purpose. There was one moment when it seemed as if the bridge tottered under the unwonted burden, and threatened to go down and drag the whole train with it into the gulf; but the coolness and nonchalance of the rude engineers were admirable; the enormous box moved steadily forward and the danger was soon over.

From Anson we commenced five days' travel to Quebec—first our way led us towards the sources of the Kennebec and Penobscot, and then over the mountains forming the frontier to the Valley of la Chaudière, a tributary of the St. Lawrence.

As we approached the frontier, the country became more mountainous; densely forested at times with birch, pine, maple, and beech; and abounding, in common with the whole of the Northern States, with ponds and lakes. The route was hardly practicable for the light open vehicle which served as our baggage waggon, and the season was favourable for the musquitoes and black-flies which left us no peace in the after part of the day. Settlers there were, as yet few and far apart; but wherever found there we were sure to meet with signs of thriftiness, and a ready show of hospitality.. Calling to mind a farm situated about five miles south of the boundary line, where we passed the evening and night, alternately bitten by the musquitoes beyond endurance, and then smoked out of all patience by sitting over a little fire of damp logs burning in the very door-way, to prevent the ingress of these unwelcome visitors—I am yet constrained to smile at recollecting the subject of a long conversation which arose between our host and hostess, and ourselves; and in giving it you almost verbatim, I think it may tend to your entertainment also. A degree of inquisitiveness, which would be called impertinent in the more crowded walks of life, is both allowable and natural in the wilderness. Removed far from the ordinary communication with their kind and still further from the theatre of great events; rarely visited by strangers unlike themselves—nothing is more conceivable than that a desire to satisfy curiosity, to hear something new, to keep up their connexion with passing events, should render the backwoodsmen inquisitive; and far from being either surprised or bored by the exercise of such a natural propensity in these individuals, I have felt sympathy with it, and always deemed it my duty to satisfy that craving which was so comprehensible, to the utmost of my ability.

I am far from having found people of this description, whether in the South, North, or West. disposed to go beyond what might be deemed allowable in their peculiar position, if rightly considered As to the constant, impertinent, audacious, and persevering cross-questioning which many English travellers, male and female, have complained of, in society, in coaches, and at taverns, as a national trait,—and which I should probably have as little patience with as themselves; all that I can observe is, that neither my companion nor myself were subjected to it, and it might be surmised, whether the complainants had not either fallen into remarkably bad company, or laid themselves open to it by singularity of conduct, manners, or demeanour.

Our host and hostess on the evening in question, soon satisfied themselves as to the matters uppermost in their minds at the sight of strangers: whence we came, and where we were going? What was the news we had brought from Boston first, and Portland and Augusta last? What the President was doing? Why he had not come to Maine, but had turned, after reaching Concord, and gone back in a hurry to Washington? Whether we were merchants, and had any 'plunder' to dispose of, and so forth. Then came the usual surprise of finding that we were not natives of the States, and divers pertinent inquiries about our several countries, Britain and Switzerland, or of France, as my companion found they had a more distinct idea of that country.

I saw that the very mention of France had a remarkable effect upon our hostess. She first looked at her husband with a knowing glance, and indented his ribs by a gentle application of her elbow. Her whole manner began to evince a visible change; she appeared stirred up to her innermost soul, like a tub of ale in fermentation. Her husband looked sheepish, but evidently caught the contagion, whatever it was. He moved restlessly on his seat. What possessed them? Was it curiosity? No! The questions hitherto put, were leisurely and calmly propounded by one or the other. People seldom go into ecstasies in the back woods. Was it a joke? No! The Yankees are too matter-of-fact to be a fun-loving nation.

Whatever it was, it was evident that the word *France* produced the change. Were they of French descent? No! Theirs was the pure Anglo-American blood?

Not to fill my sheet and the measure of your impatience at this early stage of my story by further mystification, we shortly found that the passion which so strongly agitated the frames of this sober pair, was not curiosity to learn, but the desire to impart a secret, if they might only do it with perfect safety, and the hope of being believed. By degrees, out it came—it was as follows, and I am able to give it you nearly verbatim, as the husband and wife alternately added pieces of intelligence.—Some time in 1830, it was a little while after the news of the 'Three Glorious Days' had reached this out-of-the-way corner of the world, an old gentleman arrived at their farm from the frontier; and, as they found, from beyond sea. He had not landed at Quebec, but lower down, and immediately had engaged Canadians to bring him, his servant, and his two trunks over the mountains to the States. His trunks contained four hundred weight of gold !! The old gentleman's own name was Gold,--his servant's, Mac-Double. He had a large way of speaking of his fortune—desires to place it—his unsuspicious conduct—respect paid him by his domestic—the latter dressed so well, that they hardly knew him from his master. Mr. Gold's dress was costly, but mudds. His servant put him on white cotton—no, silk stockings and morocco shoes—he had a great mahogany snuff-box, and a ring on his finger that cost four pounds;—had travelled every where—to Paris, and London, and Jerusalem, and had seen every thing but Lot's wife, which the people had forgotten to show him. He had also seen Vesuvius, that flings out 'volors of flame.' His exceeding wisdom,—so great, that our host complained, he could not talk with him, and that he knew more about America and politics, than he did. His servant would not sit at table with him. The stranger had checks on every bank in the Union,—wanted to get on and vest his money. Something strange about him !

Our host by way of commentary, made a modest speech about his own honesty, and the difficulty of lugging the heavy trunks off in the night, without puffing and blowing hard. Thus far the relation had gone pretty smoothly, the one adding what the memory of the other did not readily supply. But the feverish symptoms were far from abating till after a pause which was maintained with dogged perseverance by the husband in spite of the signs of manifest impatience on the part of the wife, the latter, true to the impulse of her softer nature, untied the string, and let the cat out of the bag,—pronouncing slowly in a tone of mystery, the words, '*We* think it was the King of France, just after he was driven away.'

Thus relieved, they now overwhelmed us with a torrent of interrogations. Had we seen the King of France? Yes. What then did he look like?—and we must have unconsciously fed the idea, which had taken such strong hold upon their minds; for looks of much sober satisfaction passed between the happy couple, in the firm belief that the sagacious surmise which they seemed to have fostered from the first, had thus met with such complete confirmation. And though we thought it our duty to mention that it was credibly affirmed that Charles the Tenth had taken refuge in England, they evidently shut their ears against any surmise that might prove a disturbance to their own fond conceit, and went to bed in a flutter of self-congratulation.

Well, they are no worse for their harmless belief that they have entertained the ex-monarch, and have alone detected him through his disguise.

Proceed we to the frontier, which in this part of the line has been definitively settled to the satisfaction of both parties; but not so further eastward, where the decision of the arbiter, the King of Holland, seems to have satisfied neither. However difficult of arrangement, this nevertheless should by all means be finally settled by the two governments now, while there is good understanding and peace between them; and not left year by year, till it may become a source of serious misunderstanding and contention.

The frontier line runs here over a range of mountains of medium height, and a few hours' further travel brings you to the 'head-waters' of La Chaudière. That fine pastoral stream runs for fifty miles through what may be called a continued village; so numerous are the little farms which border the line of road, and thicken in the vicinity of the various parish churches. The fields are extremely narrow, separated by fences, and run up from the river bank far into the country. The inhabitants of these vallies are much in the same condition, both moral and political, in which they were in the days of French rule; and to them Britain has indeed been a paternal government.

Nothing can be more striking than the difference of the customs, manners, and the appearance of the population on either side of the boundary. To the North, a savour of ancient simplicity and lazy contentment is remarked which contrasts drolly with the busy, speculative deportment and brisk movements of their neighbours of the United States. You seem to have dropped from the top of the hills into the Old World. An air of repose reigns in the landscape; there is an absence of busy but prosaic improvement, and of tracts of un-cleared and unappropriated land in the Vale, which indicate another state of things. You proceed hour after hour, without seeing a newly-constructed house. Crucifixes are reared at the road-side—pretty white-washed churches, after the true French model, with glaringly tinned roofs and steeples, and faded interiors, appear rising over the grey roofs of the village. The gait and demeanour of the peasantry of both sexes; their language and costume—which retain much of their French uniformity and colouring; the unfeigned politeness of the people to one another and to the passenger; the constant salutations which you are invited to return; the rows of neat little cottages, enclosed by walls like driven snow—conveniently situated with respect to one another, so that daily compliments and gossip may reign unbroken along the whole line;—the orchards and little strips of garden, often but the breadth of the house, and a couple of yards across, full of roses, violets and pinks, lying sheltered from the N. E. wind;—the cheerful-looking girls, tripping to mass with a flower compressed between the folded pocket handkerchief and the prayer-book;—these, and a thousand other details remind the traveller of the fields of France. Here you have, I believe, an idea of the general appearance of the villages and scenes of Lower Canada, both up and down the St. Lawrence, and in the converging vallies under long cultivation.

From the crest of the ridge forming the frontier, you gain a glimpse of the Montmorenci mountains, sixty miles distant, though they are subsequently lost sight of, till within thirty miles of the St. Lawrence, when they begin to form a prominent feature in the landscape. Advancing from the south, you see nothing of the river till you are close upon it, and then the view which bursts on you is one of the most enchanting you can conceive.

You gain the brink of the deep ravine, down which that mighty flood glides towards the yet distant ocean, and at once, Cape Diamond, the City of Quebec, the port and river above and below, with the distant mountains and wide slope of beautiful country sweeping up to their base, open before you.

Your first glance will hardly enable you to realize to your mind the vast proportions of the river gliding at your feet—so well is the great breadth supported by the height of the wooded banks which rise on both sides nearly perpendicular from the margin. The sight of the fortress, the Ehrenbreitstein of the West, will hardly aid you, for its proportions are also colossal; and it is not till you look to the detail—the numerous vessels of all burdens, crowded round the foot of the promontory, and spotting the water far and near; the city surrounded by its walls; its churches, convents, and public buildings, and the distant fields, and villages, that you conceive the true sublimity of the scene before you. The beauty of the wide tract of country lying beyond the city, with its thousand farms and villages—the appearance of the long line of white cottages stretching down the shores right and left, as far as the eye can reach; the aspect of Orleans Island, lying in mid-channel, a few miles below the city; and of the double range of the Montmorenci mountains, running obliquely to the course of the river, till thirty miles below the city, when they terminate in the bold promontory of Cape Tourment,—can only be conceived by those who have gazed upon this landscape.

If the Canadian traveller is thus impressed with the noble character of the scenery about Quebec at a first view—a more leisurely examination of its features is not calculated to detract from his first impressions. But I am not going to enter upon any minute description of the many points of interest within and without the city, which we had an opportunity of visiting during our stay of six days. All, whether purely picturesque, or connected with our historical recollections, have been so often and so well descanted upon, that you must also have become familiar with them. In the city we met with both good and hospitable society, visited a little—dined with the officers of the gallant Camerons,—soirée'd here and there—and peeped at the churches and monasteries. Out of the city, there was the Indian village and the falls of Loretto to visit—the magnificent Falls of Montmorenci, a full and brimming river pouring over a rock two hundred and forty feet high, into the St. Lawrence, within nine miles of the city,—the shore down as far as Cape Tourment, with its line of cascades and pretty villages—the romantic gorge and cataract of St. Anne, echoing in the thick forests—the roaring Falls of the Chaudière among the deep woods on the right bank, and so on. Every thing in the region around Quebec bears the mark of sublimity. Wolfe's Cove, and the Heights of Abraham had their peculiar interest, and were visited again and again.

I was quite unprepared for the extreme beauty and interest of the whole country in the vicinity of this city, now clothed in its bright but short-lived summer livery. The weather was during the whole time of our stay characteristic of the climate, and constant showers of heavy rain were followed, each hour, by bright sparkling sun-shine, during which the country far and near, looked indescribably beautiful, and the roofs of the city sparkled like silver. I recollect one evening at the Montmorenci especially, when having pacified the female Cerberus who defends the entrance giving access to the best point of view,—I took my post a little before sunset on the edge of the high perpendicular wall of shady rock which bounds the hollow scooped in the shore by the Fall to the east, and watched the sun sinking from a broken mass of dark rainy clouds in the west into a band of clear greenish blue near the horizon. The effect of the level beams falling at this moment upon the wide river and its verdant banks—and edging the outlines of the city and citadel on Cape Diamond while the mass of the promontory was in shade—the contrast of the flood of light bathing the wide sweep of cultivated country to the north, with the gloom reigning in the recess of the cataract close at hand, filled with driving mist and vapour,—formed a picture of indescribable beauty and sublimity.

Nothing can present a stronger contrast than the vallies and streams of the Mississippi and the St. Lawrence. Both rise on the same elevated table land to the eastward of the Great Lakes. The Mississippi having gathered strength in that wild region, rolls off to the southward through its channel of three thousand miles in length, without ever expanding to a lake of any size. The St. Lawrence, at its very outset, the offspring of innumerable ponds and lakes, passes through land-locked seas of fresh water for many hundred miles. The former river is remarkable for the sudden and constant changes to which its fluctuating torrent of muddy water is liable,—the latter pours a limpid, even, tide towards the sea; undisturbed by either periodical or extraordinary floods of any magnitude. The banks and bed of the Mississippi are, as you will recollect, subject to constant and terrible changes; those of its rival mark by the smooth sward and the cottage on its margin, the evenness of its course year after year. While the shores of the Mississippi and its tributaries are for the most part monotonously low, those of the St. Lawrence, though in the state of nature covered with a dark mantle of unbroken forests, are undulating, and often diversified by mountain ridges. The configuration of the estuaries by which they seek the ocean, one divided into many channels, the other widening gradually into a deep and spacious bay;—this, far down towards the Tropic, that, in a region where an arctic winter reigns for many months of the year, alike render them distinct. Finally, the tide is scarcely felt above the mouths of the Great River of the West, while in that of the North-east it ascends upwards of four hundred miles.

The region through which the St. Lawrence flows, may be termed the Land of Falling Waters. It is not Niagara alone which might stamp it with this epithet. On every side, if you trace the tributaries up into the solitude of the forests, you hear the dash of cataracts, and see their smoke rising over the dark woods. The frequent long lines of rapids too, give a peculiar character to the river, very distinct from its great rival.

You may next follow us in our hasty excursion, above the Richelieu Rapids to Trois Rivières, whither we were conveyed in comfort and safety in a splendid steam-boat, emulating in its general arrangements for the safe, commodious, and expeditious conveyance of its passengers, those of the United States; and rather superior to them in its contrivances to add to the accommodation and comfort of the individual.

Trois Rivières is a small town situated just midway between Quebec and Montreal. There was nothing in it or its surrounding scenery to claim attention; but we had been urged, if we could muster time and the necessary perseverance to overcome a few difficulties, to attempt to reach certain Falls on the River St. Maurice, which here joins the parent stream,—falls which report was pleased to magnify into rivals of the mighty Niagara. The highest of these, La Grande-Mère, though only thirty-five miles distant from Trois Rivières, is rarely visited except by Canadian *voyageurs*, who occasionally ascend this river to a chain of lakes interlocking with the head-waters of the Saugany and the rivers of Hudson's Bay, which a month's travel, by canoe and portage, will enable the adventurer to reach.

After spending an afternoon in scheming, and making the various arrangements, we engaged two Indians with a tiny bark canoe, just capable of holding the four conveniently; and consigning our persons, a basket of provisions, and a couple of blankets, to this fragile mode of conveyance, early one lovely morning in July, we began to force our way up the St. Maurice, a river with about the breadth and the volume of water of the Rhine at Neuwied.

In the course of the excursion we found that there were four portages of various lengths, in which we had to disembark and trudge through the forest at the side of the foaming rapids by which the course of the river was interrupted, followed by our myrmidons, the one carrying the provision basket and the other the canoe strapped on his back.

Four and twenty miles from the St. Lawrence we reached the first great fall, the Shawinnegame. Here the whole river is seen precipitating itself over an inclined and disjointed barrier of rock of about one hundred and forty feet in perpendicular height, into a narrow obstructed gorge, surrounded by forest; and struggling through a terrible scene of foam and confusion into an expanded basin below.

The aspect of the fall was more sublime than beautiful, and the same observation will apply to La Grande Mère, eleven miles further up the country, which it resembles in its general features. We found the latter broad cataract, after some hours further progress against the powerful current, buried in gloomy woods, forming two tremendous cascades one hundred and sixty feet in height, separated from each other by a rocky pine-covered island. The immense body of water which is thus seen in motion imparts a sentiment of wonder to the mind, while the character of the surrounding scenery is not such as to add an impression of beauty. A tall isolated mass of shivered rock close to the right hand fall, the fanciful epithet applied to which, gives a name to the whole cataract, yields some character to scenery which is otherwise far from interesting. As to its resemblance to Niagara, that is mere fancy: and as to rivalry, though all the falls in Europe would perhaps not form a Shawinnegame, yet it would take many such to form Niagara. That stands alone, and must ever do so.

Our return to Trois Rivières was made, if not on the wings of the wind, at least on the foam of the waters, for our light canoe flew rather than floated down the rapids in descending. A novice in travelling might be pardoned in looking suspiciously a-head, on nearing the edge of some of the hissing and roaring ripples and *chutes* over which the steady paddle and eye of the Indian guides the canoe in safety. Of course one night had to be spent under a bark-shed in the forest, and excepting that the blood-thirstiness of the innumerable musquitoes reduced us to the necessity of being half strangled by smoke, we had no hardship to complain of.

To vary the journey we preferred continuing our route towards Montreal by land, and mounting on an open car called here a '*Marche-donc!*' from the ordinary exclamation of the Canadian driver to his active little ponies, we contrived to reach that city, distant ninety miles, in two stages of forty-five miles each.

The river flows through this division of its course for the most part through vast fertile plains, bounded by ranges of hills, and the banks teem with pretty fields, orchards, cottages, and handsome faces.

At Montreal, a city which is far from being without a claim to beauty and sublimity of situation, but which we thought had one of the most gloomy interiors we had ever seen, my comrade and myself decided upon pursuing a separate course, and while the former took his departure by the direct route to Lake Champlain and the Saratoga Springs, where we had rendezvous for the succeeding month, with divers friends and acquaintances,—I proposed extending my slight acquaintance with the Canadas, by taking a greater sweep before I rejoined him at that centre of attraction, which I did eventually a fortnight after. My excursion in the interval up the river Ottawa to Bytown, and thence along the course of the Rideau Canal to Kingston, was rather tedious, as it took considerably more time than I had been led to calculate upon. Nevertheless I am far from regretting it, as it gave me an opportunity of seeing in detail one of the most colossal works of this age of wonders. Such indeed is the Rideau Canal in all its parts.

The Ottawa, flowing through a thinly inhabited region, is a beautiful stream, navigable up to Bytown, with the exception of three short rapids, round which the necessary canals and locks are probably by this time completed. At the Falls of the Ottawa, a mile or two above Bytown, the whole river, at the distance of one hundred and twenty miles from Montreal, precipitates itself over a long broken ridge of limestone rock by many channels, and, immediately below, Rideau river comes pouring over a perpendicular rock into the main stream. Here commences the celebrated canal, by an ascent of eight superb locks; and the bed of the Rideau then forms the line of the canal, by aid of many further locks, back-waters, and dams, planned and executed with truly Roman skill and solidity—till it gradually ascends and merges into Rideau lake, a sheet of water forty miles long by ten broad, full of innumerable islands.

From this summit, at the height of two hundred and eighty-three feet above the Ottowa, and one hundred and forty-four above Lake Ontario—it is then conducted by a chain of lakes, lying on different levels, into the bed of the river Caraqui, and so to its junction with the lake at Kingston, after a course of one hundred and thirty-two miles.

The whole series of forty-seven locks, varying from four to fifteen feet in perpendicular rise and fall, are throughout thirty-two feet broad, by one hundred and thirty four in length; and are built with the finest hewn stone and a solidity of workmanship in every detail, which is hardly equalled by any of the class in the mother country. The latter half of the canal is the most interesting and picturesque, especially the works between Pinnacle and Cranberry lakes; comprising four gigantic locks of fifteen feet rise each; an artificial cut through the solid rock for the surplus waters of the upper Lake—and a dam across the natural outlet of the same. The latter, constructed in the form of an arc, with a chord of three hundred feet,—one hundred feet in breadth, thirty of which are solid masonry, and a perpendicular height of seventy feet,—is one of the boldest and most colossal works of any age or country.

The construction of this canal completes the line of internal water communication between the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Gulf of Mexico.

LETTER VII.

AMONG my memoranda of short excursions, I find those of several trips on the River Hudson.

The general adoption of steam-navigation has been productive of astonishing changes here as elsewhere. Within the memory of men yet in the prime of life, a voyage to Albany, the seat of the State Legislature, situated on the banks of the river, upwards of one hundred and forty miles from New York, was an undertaking of no small importance. A week or ten days were not unusually spent on the trip, which was made in small schooners, well provisioned accordingly. It is entertaining to hear the descriptions given by those whose memories are tenacious, how these voyages were conducted—not perhaps with quite as much nonchalance and oddity as distinguished those of the early Dutch settlers of the province, (if an apparently veracious historian may indeed be credited,) but step by step, as wind and tide,—the influence of which is felt nearly the whole of the way, permitted. You hear how they were forced to get hold of the bottom, and lie fast during ebb-tide—how they were becalmed in the Tappan-see, and plagued by baffling gusts in the recesses of the Highlands;—how they had to lie-to in a tempest in Haverstraw Bay, or were nearly upset by a 'sneezer' from Anthony's Nose:—further that they ran a-ground on the Overslaught, a reef of rocks some leagues below Albany,—and finally landed, with a doubt on their minds, whether the prayers of the congregation, which were frequently requested on departure for so portentous a voyage, had been heard and answered. At the present day, who thinks anything of a voyage to Albany? You take your seat in the cabins or on the deck of a steamboat at the Battery, with two or three hundred fellow-passengers—morning or evening, as it suits your convenience. The first and second bell of warning have sounded, and the appointed hour having come, the third last tingle gives the engineer his order to put on the steam. The boat is unmoored—the passage-plank drawn in, the engine heaves one or two heavy aspirations and the boat begins to move. In vain the belated traveller, just one second too late, waves his hand, and shakes his head in despair: an American steamer waits for no man, but at the appointed minute slides along the wharf into the stream; and, after a sweep into the river, gains its full speed, and shoots past the long tiers of shipping, up the broad channel of the Hudson.

You soon leave the low shores of the city behind, and see on one side of you the pretty wooded banks of Manhattan Island sloping to the water, covered with country seats and cottages, half hidden in their groves of willows and fruit trees; and on the other, for twenty miles, the perpendicular wall of trap rocks, known by the name of the Palisadoes. You pass hundreds of white sails, some on the main stream, and others clustering about the entrance of the numerous little creeks which disembogue along the shore. Then the open expanse of the Tappan-see, and its neighbour, Haverstraw Bay, lies in turn before,—around,—and behind you; and, gaining the foot of the Fish-kill mountains, which have long appeared to raise a barrier to your passage, you suddenly turn to the left, and, entering through the gateway by which the noble river seems to escape from their recesses, glide rapidly amidst scenes, which, for the exquisite beauty of their several proportions, forms, and colouring, are rarely equalled. And here, in the bosom of the mountains, at the distance of fifty miles from New York, the first and only pause in the voyage is made, as the boat careers up to the landing-place at West Point. You have, however, barely time to glance at this, the richest scenery of the whole river,—for, to land some of your party, and to make acquisition of other passengers, demands the sacrifice of but a few precious minutes—after which, the cable is cast on board and, in a quarter of an hour you see the Hotel and the buildings of the Military School lessening in the distance, as the boat presses on between the mountains towards the upper extremity of the Highlands. Pollopel Island is soon reached, and you bear away with breathless speed into the open champaign country above.

Towns, villages, and country-seats, surrounded by beautiful fields and forests, adorn both sides of the river; while, in full view to the left, the blue range of the Kaats-kill mountains rear themselves over the horizon for many miles. Mile follows after mile, and hour after hour. Hudson City appears in view on the right, and two hours later, and within nine after you quit the sea-board, you see the domes and wharfs of Albany rise on the left.

Such is the uniform voyage made to Albany at the present day by thousands every week; and whenever I had occasion to visit the Hudson, either ascending or descending, I was anew struck with the beauty of the details.

I think that in one of my first letters, it was mentioned, that we had last year spent some days with Washington Irving in the Highlands, and made a summer's excursion with him to the Kaats-kill mountains. On my return from Canada I found him living in retirement somewhat nearer the city of New York; and in the neighbourhoood of the favourite scenes of his boyhood; and many a happy hour we spent together strolling quietly round the country, stumbling on recollections of his early times, and talking of the past. As last year we had *trailed* Rip Van Winkle into the recesses of the Kaats-kill mountains—we now traced Ichabod Crane through all his temptations and perils. We reconnoitered the little old Dutch farm-houses inhabited by the Van Tassels and Van Brommels of the classic neighbourhood to the east of the Tappansee. We sauntered along the pellucid stream, filtering through Saw-Mill valley —sheltered from the busy world behind the heights of the Hudson. We dozed away a sultry hour in the shades of Sleepy Hollow, or reposed within sound of the hum of voices proceeding from the little out-of-the-way hedge-schools—the focus of learning for a scattered neighbourhood. We stood on the spot where our brave Major André was captured, and within sight of the place where he suffered. We further did not forget to linger near the little odd Dutch church, which still stands with its red roof, white walls, squat cupola and adverse weather-cocks, above the little dell where the Headless Horseman wreaked his wrath on the sconce of Ichabod; and leaned moralizing over the paling of the quiet church-yard, where Brom Bones and hundreds of his neighbours lie in a tangled, but odoriferous labyrinth of elder, thyme, wild-strawberries, and cat-mint. Lastly, we did not fail, at even-tide, to sit with our faces turned towards the Far West, in whose distant regions we had wandered together so far and so happily,—gazing with delight on the glowing river and its scenery. The Tappan-see might be seen in front, with the precipitous Cape of Point-no-Point, and shores dotted with pretty towns and villages; then Haverstraw Bay with many sails glistening on its surface: further to the right, the blue Highlands, and to the left, the receding vista of the river and bounding Palisadoes stretching for twenty miles to the vicinity of New York, the great mart of the Union. At our feet might be seen a brawling brook, crossing and re-crossing the road leading to the water's edge,—here diving under a thicket, and there tumbling over the rough stones, and forming a miniature cascade on its short passage to the river at our feet.

In such scenes, while the bob-link and the robin sang their evening song, we would talk about the past, present, and future—and the climes and friends in whom we had mutual interest. A few days passed in this tranquil manner, with those whom you both love and respect, are worth months of glare and excitement in the bustle of crowded society.

The people of the United States may truly be said to be a gregarious race. The truth of this is exemplified in their summer enjoyments, when, in spite of the inconveniences entailed upon collecting together in large numbers, during a season when the heat is truly oppressive,—go where you will, you meet with crowded stages, crowded hotels and boarding houses, crowded steam-boats, and crowded drawing-rooms. You see people tormenting themselves by parading in all the bondage of ceremony and full-dress amidst glare and dust, when you would naturally suppose that a cool nook in the forest, and a dress of easy and unrestrained negligence would be among the necessaries of life for the time being. There is not a lodging-house, however inconvenient, on the hot and fervid sands of the Atlantic, that is not filled, to its last small confined bed-chamber. And as to the mineral springs, whether of the north or south, July and August find the accommodations in their vicinity filled to overflowing. It was our lot to pass some time for two succeeding summers at Saratoga Springs, the most celebrated and the most fashionable, and of course the most frequented of those mineral waters which the lavish hand of Providence has caused to gush forth from the bosom of this favoured land. Its proximity to New York (for what is 180 miles now-a-days in a country where rail-roads and steam-boats form an unbroken line of communication), and the easy transit which may be made from it, either to Canada by Lakes George and Champlain, or to Niagara by the great western route, render it a place of general rendezvous for summer parties. The number of well-dressed idlers compressed within the bounds of the little village was computed upon the year of our second visit to amount to upwards of three thousand,—a motley crowd of men and women of all degrees;—patricians, plebeians, first-rates, second-rates, third-rates: gentlemen whose manners savoured of the good old school, and others whose manners indicated their being copied from some new school, or—no school at all: legislators, travellers, others of literary name; men with name but little money; others who had money and no name;—citizens and families from every State in the Union—beaux and belles—the belles of this year, of last year, and the belles of the year to come; hosts of cheerful pretty faces of the softer sex, and hordes of young aspirants to their good graces, rioting in the fair sunshine of the morning of life; with a very partial sprinkling of responsible matrons, and irresponsible old gentlemen, to keep them in order. As to the real votaries of the nymphs of the crystal fountains, (for the Springs are many,) they were as usual comparatively few in number; though hundreds of both sexes would rise at early dawn, and, enveloped in shawls and surtouts, glance through the colonnades—trip down to the principal fountain of Congress Spring,—take a sparkling draught, and then return to dress for breakfast; yet save a few regular old stagers, who might be seen with pale dyspeptic faces, with their collars pulled up over their ears, pacing backwards and forwards on the little enclosure by the spring, alternately sipping and marching till they had imbibed the prescribed quantity—and a number of invalids of the softer sex, who I was informed drank with the same steady purpose in their small chambers,—but few indications of suffering were visible, and Saratoga was a scene of as perfect freedom from worldly woe and care as you can conceive. I would not however deny that it appeared as though there was a considerable hollowness in much of this gaiety, for the dust and the heat, and the ennui, and the yawning which pervaded the reign of pleasure and fashion,—not to speak of the squeezing and the elbowing at meal-times,—was far from being agreeable; and though I believe many, if not most of the young people esteemed Saratoga a paradise of delights, yet among those whose halcyon days had passed, there were a good number of faces whose expression was evidently that of 'smiling at grief.'

The public accommodations for the visitors at the Springs are certainly on a splendid scale, the private do not correspond. As not unusual in the dispositions of hotels, even in the most civilized parts of the Union, every thing is sacrificed to the accommodation of the mass. Thus the drawing and dining-rooms, the spacious and elegant piazzas are strikingly commodious, but the bed-chambers are confined, ill-furnished, and inconvenient; and as to private sitting-rooms, it would be unreasonable to expect them. There are four large and as many small hotels or boarding houses, if I recollect right;—all tasteful buildings built of clapboard or brick, surrounded by trees and shrubberies, and most, if not all, having piazzas of tasteful proportions attached to them. That in front of our hotel, Congress Hall, was two hundred feet long, and twenty wide, with a very elevated roof, supported by seventeen trees, wrought into columns and garlanded with creepers. The house accommodated probably in one way or another four hundred boarders.

Well, you may ask, how do the people spend their time?—Much as other honest idle people do. The excitement of the morning chiefly consisted in the bustle consequent upon the departure of a host of guests to Ballston Springs, Schenectady, or Albany, by the Rail-road, about ten o'clock. Then followed a listless time, during which the gentlemen amused themselves by various excursions, or slunk away to smoke, or to the billiard-table, or the reading-room; while the ladies whiled it away in the drawing-room, in their chambers, with books from the circulating library, or in visiting. The approach of the dinner hour, which, if I mistake not, was three in the afternoon, and the return of the cars on the Rail-road, set the blood and the flagging spirits of all in motion. The new comers scrambled for rooms. Such as had been making excursions came dropping in, and the toils of the toilet being at an end, for a quarter of an hour before dinner the drawing-rooms, and the back and front piazzas of the hotels, swarmed with a resuscitated crowd, like an ant-hill into which a mischievous boy, or an equally mischievous professor of natural history, has thrust a stick.

The dinner-bell rings, the doors are thrown open, and in you rush! Happy the wight whose seat is assured to him by right of previous possession, or by the kindness and attention of the domestics of a party to whom he may fortunately be attached; for though I would not give you to understand that exactly the same haste is observed here that I have formerly described as usual in the West, yet, depend upon it, there is no time lost, —and the meal is but a meal after all, and goes like clock-work. The two courses dispatched, the company return to the drawing-room. In fair weather, this is the favourite time for a drive, and, after you have squeezed and been squeezed for a while, introducing yourself with some lady into the endless chain which moves round the room with the checked step of a funeral procession, and thus properly digested your dinner,—one party after another deserts, and all scatter themselves over the country in equipage or on horseback.

The country, immediately about Saratoga and Ballston Springs, is not in itself interesting, though there are many pleasant rides on every side; but there are excursions within reach which fully repay the exertion of making them. That to Saratoga Lake, a beautiful sheet about the size of Ullswater, embedded in the forest with varied shores, is truly of this class; and many a delightful day have we spent there, and at the pretty inn on its banks, in enviable retirement from the noise, bustle, and glare of the Springs. The scene of the defeat of General Burgoyne lies yet more to the north-east.

Other points of interest might be mentioned, but they all sink into insignificance in comparison with those afforded by a couple of days' excursion to the northward, over a tract of country which may be considered as the most classic ground in America: and though I ought properly to return with you to the Springs for the evening, I here take the opportunity of alluding to them.

This road will lead you nearly due north, to the cascades of the Hudson, at Glenn's Falls, where the river boils over a most singular barrier of black limestone rocks by three channels, and forms one of those astounding cascades, which, however common on the rivers of this continent, are rarely met with on the same scale in Europe.

Passing the river by the bridge erected in the very mist of the Falls—you proceed by a hilly and woodland road to Lake George, or as the French called it, Lac St. Sacrament, one of the loveliest in any country or clime. It lies in a deep valley, and is surrounded throughout its whole extent of thirty-six miles, by picturesque mountains, clothed with wood, and gaining an elevation of from five hundred to fifteen hundred feet over the surface. The extreme transparency of the waters, the multitude of small wooded islands, and the beauty of the Narrows, have been the theme of every tourist. The dividing ridge between the waters of the Hudson and those of the St. Lawrence is passed just before you descend upon the village of Caldwell, near the Southern extremity of the lake, and from the termination to the north, a creek descends through a steep and rocky channel to Lake Champlain, near the celebrated fort of Ticonderoga. The whole of this line of country, from the Hudson to the Canadian frontier, is remarkable as forming the scene of some of the most remarkable events both in the French and Revolutionary wars, but particularly in the former. At the head of Lake George are the ruins of Fort William-Henry and Fort George, in whose vicinity much blood was shed in the French wars of 1755—1757; and especially, in the latter year, when the horrible massacre of the English garrison, after capitulation, by the Indians under the eye of the Marquis de Montcalm took place.

But to return to the Springs. The afternoon having passed, and the evening repast, which is a kind of mixture of tea and supper, the labours of the evening commence,—balls, cotillion parties, occasional concerts given by wandering minstrels, form some variety to the ordinarily long evening spent in chit-chat. A few sober personages will withdraw, and get up a party at whist, else cards are far from being fashionable. Musical taste is here as elsewhere affected by most persons; but though decided talent in individuals is not wanting; the majority of the Americans, like thousands of the English, have not a quaver of true music in their composition. Yet music is an accomplishment, and whether the cranium of the young lady promises well or ill, music is taught. Sometimes a sweet-throated, but timid girl, will warble forth a song; but the atmosphere of the Springs is not congenial to female display. In brief, you soon see evident signs, that the day is longer than necessary, and hundreds go to their beds wearied and worn out.

I am, however, rather speculating upon the feelings of others, than describing either my own or those of my more immediate companions. We had come here, not merely to pass a week or two in a scene of gaiety, but to meet divers of our most intimate transatlantic friends from all quarters; and both on this account, and also that we were foreigners, and had no reason to stay an hour after we found that the scene palled upon us, there was both pleasure and amusement within our reach.

Perhaps you will agree with me, that it is less to the state of the whole people as a body that you must look for the degree of success or failure attending any political experiment in a country, than to the interior construction and state of society. That, I should say, is the real test of the applicability of any system, or any theory to the state of the times or of mankind. It is not surely whether a man is taxed more or less for the support of his government,—but are the individuals composing the nation, each in his degree, happier, better, more contented :—are the principles of education and of religious instruction sound ; and is the tone of society in general according to the law of God, which is also the law of good taste. That is surely the best government, where there is not only the most order in the general machinery, but where there is also the greatest general happiness and Christian practice in private life.

It would appear, under the peculiar position of the United States, still open to a ceaseless influx of fresh emigrants and subject to a constant political and social excitement, to be much too early to determine how the form of government they have chosen, may influence society at large. Who shall yet pretend to say, whether the democratic principle elevates or debases—or whether in America the demon of disorder, or the angel of order will eventually prevail.

Among the grievances of the day, the fruits of the prevailing temper of the people and of their government, I should be inclined to class the constant irritation from the rise of political questions—the elections by which the whole mass are more or less agitated from year's end to year's end, and the degrading style of warfare carried on against private character by the innumerable polemical newspapers. No one so good, no one so inoffensive and unblemished in life, —but, on stepping forward to prefer with others a claim to office—his person is covered with abuse, his character attacked, his family circle broken in upon by the rude and mendacious pen of anonymous scribblers. In the same manner there is no measure in the language of applause, and a stranger forming his judgment of persons and parties from the alternate bespattering and bepraising of the public prints, would hang in doubt whether the Americans were a nation of demigods, or one composed of the most degraded villains.

There are certain signs, perhaps it might be said of the times, rather than of their peculiar political arrangements, which the most unprejudiced traveller must surely note, which should make men pause in their judgment of the social state in America. The people are emancipated from the thraldom of mind and body which they consider consequent upon upholding the divine right of kings. They are all politically equal. All claim to place, patronage, or respect for the bearer of a great name is disowned. Every man must stand and fall by himself alone, and must make or mar his fortune. Each is gratified in believing that he has his share in the government of the Union. You speak against the insane anxiety of the people to govern—of authority being detrimental to the minds of men raised from insignificance—of the essential vulgarity of minds which can attend to nothing but matter of fact and pecuniary interest—of the possibility of the existence of civilization without cultivation, and you are not understood. I have said it may be the spirit of the times, for we see signs of it, alas, in Old England; but there must be something in the political atmosphere of America, which is more than ordinarily congenial to that decline of just and necessary subordination which God has both permitted by the natural impulses of the human mind, and ordered in His word; and to me the looseness of the tie generally observable in many parts of the United States between the master and servant,—the child and the parent,—the scholar and the master,—the governor and the governed,—in brief, the decay of loyal feeling in all the relations of life, was the worst sign of the times. Who shall say, but that if these bonds are distorted and set aside, the first and the greatest which binds us in subjection to the law of God, will not also be weakened, if not broken. This, and this alone, short-sighted as I am, would cause me to pause in predicting the future grandeur of America under its present system of government and structure of society; and, if my observation was sufficiently general to be just, you will also grant, there is that which should make a man hesitate whether those glowing expectations for the future, in which else we might all indulge, are compatible with growing looseness of religious, political, and social principle.

Besides, the religious man might be inclined to go further, and ask what is the prospect of the people in general with regard to their maintenance of pure doctrine, and fitting forms of religion—whether emancipated as they are from the wing of a national church, and yet seemingly becoming more and more impatient of rule and direction in religious matters, the mass of the people do not run the danger of falling either into cold infidelity, or burning fanaticism. The ancient law existing in some of the Eastern States, providing for the maintenance of the clergy, by every citizen being obliged to register himself as belonging to some religious community or other, and to subscribe to the maintenance of his pastor accordingly,—has been repealed in one case at least, and the maintenance of the minister left to the public good feeling and generosity. The consequence, if report says true, is not in favour of this voluntary system. The good in that State are stated to have become more unfeignedly pious, the vicious more abandoned, and a large population has sprung up that go to no church at all.

As to the present state of civilized society in the Union, every one will speak as he happens to have seen it. Real, sincere, and unaffected hospitality is to be met with every where. That every foreigner, however polished and distinguished for cultivation of mind and understanding, will, if properly recommended, find in this country acquaintances of congenial habits, is not to be doubted. He will meet with families in whose hospitable interior, wealth, taste, and right feeling combine to render life easy and delightful. In the principal cities he will find circles more or less exclusive, with the majority of individuals composing which he may be proud to acknowledge community of sentiment or feeling. Those circles which are sufficiently exclusive to allow that species of 'keeping' to be maintained in the education, manners, and behaviour of those composing it, and in the accessories, which is a distinguishing feature of good society in Europe, are from circumstances easily understood, few in number, comparatively speaking, but such still do exist. For the rest, you find dispersed through the mass, much talent, much wealth, much generosity of mind and feeling, intermingled with qualities which you would hardly find allied with them in other civilized countries. This singular *melange*, one might say, was at the present day characteristic of the country. Attributes which, according to our prejudices, should never be seen on the same carpet, or meet in the same person, are frequently observed in conjunction.

It is with society in general, as it is with the country, where you may see streets of town-like residences springing up in the midst of the primeval forest,—the squirrel gambolling in the branches at a musket shot from the 'store,' where the counter is crowded by the silks of Paris—hear the scream of the wood-pecker within sound of the piano-forte,—and see the rich crop of waving corn deformed by the interspersion of innumerable stumps of ancient forest trees. So it is with society,—you find the rude and the polished in contact; the signs of a state of things which savors of rough simplicity or semi-barbarism, intermingled with those which bespeak the inroads of luxury. You may detect luxury existing without refinement. And surely no one can suppose that it can be otherwise. The cauldron yet boils—the most incongruous substances are mixed up together. It is for time, and time alone, to produce harmony and order, to give every person and every thing its place; and, depend upon it, time will do it. There are perhaps national peculiarities, and national vulgarities, called so from their being widely spread, however discountenanced by a few, which time and good-sense will correct also.

From the questions put to me since my return, I gather that much nonsense must have been written and repeated with reference to American equality. Equality of political rights there may be, in other respects there can be none. Outward distinctions of rank may be done away with; the words, cringing, veneration, submission, condescension and such like, with all the nouns, verbs, and adverbs thereunto belonging, may be blotted from the Transatlantic dictionary, but distinctions of rank there must be, and such will be felt, as long as the world exists—arising from education, breeding, wealth, and talent, and must we not say gentle blood? I do not know how far they will allow that an honourable ancestry can be a cause of honour, but of this I am sure, that even in America, a greater degree of dishonour, and of public contempt, will descend upon the descendant of Washington or Hamilton, who should turn public defaulter, or private scoundrel, than on the son of Tom, Jack, or Harry.

I need not tell you that distinctions exist, virtually and openly. In society, the patrician despises the plebeian, and the latter feels it. The inferior may pout and pretend as he will, and the superior may indulge in grimace, but the distinction will always be felt, whether acknowledged or no. Social equality, like community of goods now-a-days, is a gracious offer made by those who have nothing, to those who have;—and you rarely meet with one of those aspirants to be considered on an equality with any one really superior to him in rank and position, but you may discover that he considers himself ineffably superior to the poor wight below him.

It is true, in America the only acknowledged distinction should be, that which is claimed by superior mind and manners. The base coin is, however, extensively mingled with the good, from the very temper and position of the country; and you see there, as in Europe, numbers begentlemanning one another, who have no single claim to the title. Gentleman is an oft abused term; and that something more was meant by it in old times than is now meant by the title, is evident. It might be as well if the Americans kept in mind the attributes of a true gentleman, that they might discern who really merits the distinction, both among themselves and their visitors.

It may suit the man of dissipated thoughts and habits, in all countries, to ridicule and hold up to contempt the early precepts of chivalry, calculating the minimum of virtue and self-abandonment, which will allow his conduct to pass current in the midst of a light-minded world; but what a gentleman was in times long gone by, when comparative darkness covered the earth, *that* he should be now in every clime and in every country. Yes, look to the attributes which formed the blazon of a true Christian gentleman of the ancient school—'faith, charity, justice, good sense, prudence, temperance, firmness, truth, liberality, diligence, hope and valour:' and the vices of which they were to be blameless—'swearing, cruelty, avarice, perjury, pride, impurity, indolence, anger, gluttony, and drunkenness'—and then look at those who would arrogate to themselves the title—and judge.

Foreigners have affirmed that the women of the United States were of a superior race to the men, both in person, style of thought, and expression. I do not know if Brother Jonathan would be gallant enough to smile at a sober compliment paid at his expence to his wife or sister, but it is, I believe, nevertheless true. There is a great charm about the females of good education; and they are justly celebrated for the solidity of those qualities which render them good wives and mothers, as well as such as catch the attention and command the respect of the stranger. Alas! that so many of those fair flowers of the West, may be compared to the beautiful ephemera of their country, which are born and glitter for a day, dying, as it might seem, before their time; sinking to the grave, just as life reaches its period of greatest enjoyment. The number of lovely girls that gather together and crowd the gay winter saloons, or deck the summer fêtes, is no less surprising than the proportion that die before their prime:—whether from the effects of a climate subject to the most sudden extremes, or an inappropriate style of dress, or both combined, it is difficult to determine. Again it has been said, and repeated, that the females are not respected as they ought to be in the United States. This I believe to be founded in error. Still I should be willing to allow that they are not appreciated as they should be, so far as their influence on society in general is not as much felt as it ought to be. It is contested, that female education is as carefully tended in America as in Europe; if so, they are hardly allowed to make the same use of it, as, from the time that either a lady marries, or is supposed to be past the age for marriage, which is tolerably early, she either vanishes altogether from the circle of society, or is thrown into the background. 'Well,' you may say, 'I suppose the mother is better at home caring for her children.' No; her children are launched at an inconceivably early age into the world, and if she will be with them, she must follow them. And here I may mention one broad line of distinction between European and American society. In the former, the prevailing tone is taken from the middle-aged. Ladies out of their teens, with mature judgment, and that grace and polish which added years give, though it may impair beauty, and subdue sprightliness, give the tone of society. But in America,—the paradise of youth, unshackled by those forms and precautions which the corruptions of European society render indispensable,—the land of confidence in the young,—the tone of social assemblages is almost altogether under the control of the young. The married and unmarriageable look on and listen, but they hardly partake—far less dictate; and one thing which immediately indicates a foreigner is, that he pays attention to them.

I have been really astonished to see, how the belle of last spring, then followed by all,—sparkling as the fire-fly flitting over her hair;—whose form was in every eye—whose words sounded sweet in every one's ear—would the next season be handed quietly into her seat among the sedative ladies of the back row, and hardly have occasion to open her lips during a whole evening's entertainment. It is true, she had been married in the interval—yet, there she was.—with a mind more matured, with beauty unimpaired, and added interest!

Delightful as the buoyant scene of youthful gaiety, enjoyment, and excitement is, all but the young become tired of badinage after a while, and then there is nothing to supply its place.

The youth of both sexes are introduced into society too soon, and become too prominent on the theatre of life. The one sex starts up at once from children to puny men, and the other become surrounded at far too early an age with the cares of American family life, which, owing to the difficulties in obtaining confidential, and trustworthy, and really attached servants, are unusually great. But no more of this—I am getting out of my province.

The period of gaiety at Saratoga, was short-lived, and having conceived the idea of a very extensive autumnal tour, my friend Pourtales joined me in departing with others for Trenton Falls, and the northern division of the State of New York, preparatory to turning our steps and faces for the second time westward.

LETTER VIII.

As I am not writing an American itinerary, I shall here, as elsewhere, make a few strides over some hundred miles of surface.

In quitting the Springs, in company with a large party, we proceeded up the lovely valley of the Mohawk—the earth hardly contains one more deserving of the epithet,—to Utica, above one hundred miles distant. Here we left the great western road, and turning to the northward, buried ourselves for a day or two in the delicious woods and dells of Trenton Falls, one of the most interesting localities in the State. I might detain you here, to my own contentment at least, to touch upon both our first and second visit to this clear stream, dashing over successive Cascades in the depth of one of the most interesting ravines, both for its natural scenery and geological structure, in the country; or to allude to other excursions made at divers times in this particular part of the Union—Oneida Lake for example, and the low country around it, with its 'corduroy roads' and 'stump-cultivation,'—rank forests full of tall hemlocks, and marshes covered with the great white *saggitaria*, I might sing the splendours of the innumerable *lobelia* glowing among the rank verdure and fern of the swamp. I might lead you aside to the beautiful Skeneateles and its sister lakes, with the chain of flourishing cities[1] on the route to Niagara, whose rise and prosperity is the boast of the citizens of this flourishing State, and the marvel of all;—or tell you of the series of mistakes which led me, against my will, to visit the secluded valley where a small remnant of the Five Nations still lingers about the Great Council House of their once powerful league, deep in the woods, and away from the great line of travel. With equal pleasure I might recount to you, how, just before my comrade and self broke completely loose from the fetters woven around us by a charming circle of accomplished and hospitable friends, we accompanied a large family party to a summer retreat, in one of the upper counties of the State, and there passed a week of social enjoyment such as was not our lot for the succeeding six months.

Few localities in America have afforded me a better example of the effects which may result from the union of steady perseverance and sound judgment, with a well applied capital.

The estate of F——, consisting of about thirty-six thousand acres, was, little more than twenty years ago, in the state of nature; there was not a road passing through it, there was not a tree cut; but for ages the heavy forest, decking the country and shading the streams and ponds, had grown and come to maturity, and decayed and fallen, to add to the mould which covered its undulating surface. After the termination of the war, our host, the son of the original purchaser, came from the metropolis of the State, devoting himself to the improvement of his patrimony. He fearlessly laid the axe at the root of the trees —built himself a log-hut, and began to cultivate a corner of his domain. In a year or two he married, and brought his young and accomplished wife, tenderly nurtured, of the best blood in the Union, to bear him companionship in his hut during the summer. In no country have you nobler examples of that devotion and heroism which enables woman to sacrifice self, and bend to circumstances. She was content with the comparative solitude of the forests, and to live as people must live, whatever be their birth and breeding,—roughly and rudely in the backwoods. Thus they passed several years, oscillating between the best society of New York in the winter, and that of workmen and rude settlers in the summer. Their log-hut was for many years their habitation. But their self-denial has long ere this had its reward.

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[1] Syracuse, Auburn, Geneva, Rochester.

One-third of the whole estate was under steady culture at the time of our visit, and they counted sixteen hundred taxable inhabitants within their boundaries. Roads were opened to the north and south. The log-hut had disappeared; and in its place a spacious and handsome country-seat, built of white marble, quarried on the estate, rose in a prominent situation on the bank of a limpid lake, two or three miles in circumference, surrounded by hanging woods and rocky shores. The tasteful elegance of the interior was in harmony with that of the exterior —shrubberies, gardens, orchards, and gravel walks, occupied the immediate vicinity; nor were the bath-house and all the facilities for boating and fishing forgotten. Such were the changes effected by patience, perseverance, and taste.

I might further dilate upon the peculiar features of the Upper St. Lawrence, upon which we entered at Ogdensburg; its thousand islands and many settlements—the restless surface of Lake Ontario—describe Kingston, York, and Burlington—the Welland Canal; and linger again with you at Niagara, where we made a second halt: but though I wish to give you a general idea of our course of travel, wherever that might tend, I must make a choice among the materials which lie on my table or in my brain,—and therefore we will strike together at once into the Thames District in Upper Canada.

Detroit was the point to which we were now, at the commencement of September, turning our steps; and, instead of pursuing the ordinary line of travel,—partly out of curiosity to see for ourselves what were the prospects of this great theatre of emigration, partly to vary our route, having been on Lake Erie the preceding year, and partly with the definite object of visiting the Missionary Settlement of the Moravian Brethren among the remnant of the Delawares on the river Thames—we were induced to make this rough journey overland.

Brandtford is an interesting place, being situated on the Reservation set aside by Government for the refugees of the Mohawk tribe and others of the Six Nations, amounting to between six and seven thousand Indians. The resemblance of Grand River, on which it lies, and its fertile flats, to their own beautiful Mohawk, has been often remarked upon.[1]

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[1] The prospects of Upper Canada are as flattering as the most sanguine speculator or philanthropist could wish. Though the emigrants, rich or poor, must make up their minds to much self-denial, much difficulty, and perhaps much unwonted personal labour, there is no reason to believe that the expectations of many will be disappointed. Certain districts of this rich portion of the continent are fast filling with a population, the majority of the individuals composing which, are men of education. Many citizens of the United States are also tempted, from a variety of considerations, to settle beyond their frontiers. The sense of interest soon overcomes the sense of dishonour in living under a kingly government. 'As long as I am growing rich,' said a substantial citizen to the writer, while travelling between Hamilton and Brandtford—'as long as I am protected in my person and my property by the laws, and can pay the taxes required, I am content: what need I have more? I have the same consideration paid me here, and as long as I am honest and bear a fair character I get as many and as good friends. I can obtain one shilling for my cheese here, while in the States I get but five cents; my corn sells for several shillings a bushel more than it would there, and takes less labour to raise, and yet my friends in New Lebanon write to me, that they wonder that I do not go a thousand miles beyond Michigan, rather than settle under a king!' This was perhaps bad patriotism, but it was good sense.

The features of this portion of Upper Canada are those of all the rich forested tracts of America, which are but thinly settled—the roads were horrible in many parts. On the second day after leaving the head of Lake Ontario, after diving through a thick forest of enormous growth called the Buckwheat Pines, and passing over a tract coming under the denomination of 'oak-openings,' we reached London, on the junction of two branches of the Thames river—a medley of framework houses, falling timber, and burning brushwood, with the addition of one or two dirty crowded inns, and a castellated Court-house and prison, standing in prominent position, built of brick and plaster. We here hired a light vehicle; and, after nearly a day's detention, moved forward, descending the rich vale of the above river, through half civilized and half-savage scenery. Our night-quarters were of the rudest, and not rendered more tolerable by the vicinity of a number of drunken Indians; and the following day about noon, after travelling westward by the regular road from London to Detroit through fine forests of maple, pine, and beech, and in greater or less contiguity to the Thames, we arrived at the boundary of the Moravian Forest.

The Reservation confided and secured by the British government to the care of the Church of the Brethren, for the Delaware Indians under their care and Christian guidance, forms a parallelogram of about twelve miles in length, and six in breadth, upon the river Thames, sixty miles from Lake St. Clair. New Fairfield lies about the centre of the tract, and as the Brethren have disposed of none of the land, and permit no settlers to encroach upon it, the whole, with the exception of the portion occupied by the settlement, and the adjacent clearing, amounting to between seven or eight hundred acres, is still covered with the dense Canadian forest. This is so far well, as it keeps whiskey-shops at arm's length. The site of the Old Settlement destroyed by the Americans in the last war, lies upon the direct route, five miles from the upper boundary line, and, on approaching it, a footway diverging to the left, conducts you through the bushes, down into the dell in which the river runs; and, crossing the latter by canoe, you find yourself in close proximity to the new Settlement.

The Indian huts appear disposed, for the most part, in a single street, at intervals from each other, stretching over an open space flanked by wheat-fields, and almost surrounded by a wide horse-shoe sweep of the Thames. As yet, hardly sufficient attention has been paid to the cultivation of gardens and orchards, which is the more to be regretted, the soil being particularly adapted for them, as the clumps of aged fruit trees covering the site of the ancient settlement testify.

The Chapel and the missionary dwellings are built in the same simple style as the Indian huts but are easily distinguished from them by the superior neatness and cleanliness observable in the surrounding premises, and in the manner in which the interstices between the rude logs are neatly closed by clay and lime. The semicircular bends of the river, both above and below that to which I have been alluding, enclose tracts of rich soil, covered with redundant crops of maize and wheat. The Indians and their teachers have, on the whole, above six hundred acres under culture. The burial ground of the Christian Indians lies just above the village, on the highest ground in the vicinity.

We were most kindly and affectionately welcomed by the worthy missionaries, who had been aware of our intention to visit them if possible. The elder, Brother Luckenbach, we found a cheerful benevolent man, about sixty years of age, thirty of which he had spent as a missionary among the Delawares, either here or on the Muskingum. His colleague was comparatively young, and very lively, useful, and intelligent; but his knowledge of the Indian language is as yet confined, having only been resident here a few years, whereas his senior speaks it fluently.

I need not dwell upon the many reasons why this visit was of particular interest to me. From my childhood, I had been accustomed to hear of missionary labour, missionary trials, and missionary joy and sorrow, and to see and know those who had spent their lives freely in the service of God among the heathen. And now I was favoured to see with my own eyes, and hear with my own ears.

At night-fall, the bell gave notice of the evening service, and the interior of the chapel was quickly filled by such of the Indian congregation, both male and female, young or old, as were within call. A simple and appropriate hymn in the Delaware language was then sung by all, to one of those noble and solemn chorales with which the Church of the Brethren is so richly furnished, and with a facility and truth by the women in particular, which mingled no small degree of surprise with the devotional feelings which it was calculated to induce; the more so, as no instrument of any kind lent its support, and neither of their teachers had voices calculated to lead. After this, the dark eyes and countenances of the Indians were turned upon the younger missionary, who after reading a text of Scripture, proceeded to offer a few simple, clear, and unaffected remarks upon it in the English language. There stood by his side an aged Delaware Indian, of a family well known to those acquainted with the history of the Brethren's Missions among the Indians of North America, by the name of the Kill-bucks. He was one of those converted many years ago, under the ministry of David Zeisberger, and had long served the Brethren as interpreter: and in that character, as his teacher paused, sentence after sentence, he now communicated to his red brethren 'the sweet words of life,' in their native language. The missionary discoursed upon "Peace and holiness, without which no man could see the Lord," and the only means of attaining them;—and during the brief continuation of his simple teaching, hardly a movement was observable in the persons or features of his auditory. The service, short and unaffected, as best suited the cause and the congregation, terminated as it began, with a hymn: at the conclusion of which all retired to their homes.

I need hardly say that we were the guests of the Brethren, and were made heartily welcome to their simple fare. I have the satisfaction of knowing that our visit, brief as it necessarily was, was not only highly gratifying to my comrade and myself, but a cheering one to them and their families; as a friendly face from without was a rarity in their solitude, and they had still less opportunity of gaining oral intelligence of their Brethren in the United States, and in Europe, such as I was happy to be enabled to communicate.

We conversed much about their labours, both past and present; and of those eminent servants of God who had been their predecessors and colleagues in the work, particularly of David Zeisberger, with whom Brother Luckenbach had been long associated on the Muskingum and elsewhere. He was certainly one of the most extraordinary men in the annals of missionary labour. He has left behind him many proofs of his diligence: besides a Hymn Book, two Indian Grammars, a Spelling-book, the Gospels, the Acts, and parts of the Epistles, are among the fruits of his laborious life and services among the Delawares, which had lasted, at the time of his death in 1808, at the age of eighty-seven, full sixty years.

The little remnant of that once mighty people, the

Delawares, collected at this place, with the addition of a few stragglers from other tribes, amounts to two hundred and sixty.[1] Of this number one hundred and eighty are in some connection with the little congregation of Christian Indians, and out of these forty are communicants. The Missionaries, though to a certain degree more favoured by circumstances, than those to which I have alluded in a former letter, maintained by the American Board of Missions on the Western Frontier, inasmuch as their Indians have less cause for communication with the whites and the savage tribes, still lamented the difficulty of effecting all the good they might desire, from the extreme aptitude of the Indians, and especially the young, to forsake good resolutions, and to be led astray by bad example. Even among many of the adults of their flock, a strange hankering after certain of their Indian superstitions, which seemed to have taken almost irradicable possession of their strong minds, would occasionally show itself in the dread of witchcraft and 'evil eyes,' and so forth; or a desire to follow some ancient Indian custom, such as howling over the graves of their relatives, and depositing meat for the use of their departed spirits. Yet with all these drawbacks, the brethren find encouragement sufficient to persevere in their labours here as elsewhere, and they are enabled to trust that many a poor Delaware is truly converted, and departs out of this world at peace with God, and in certain hope of a blissful immortality.[1]

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[1] They possess about eighteen yoke of oxen, one hundred and forty head of horned cattle, one hundred and forty horses, as many swine, and some sheep; and have yearly presents made to them of blankets, clothing, and other necessaries, by the British Government.

The morning after our arrival, the day opened with another short service similar to that of the foregoing evening, with the exception that the elder Missionary addressed the Indians in their own tongue. As our visit was a matter of great surprise to them, he gave his hearers an account of the Christian countries from which we came, of our travels on their own continent, and the Indian tribes we had visited; and explained with what purpose we had come so far to see them; with which they seemed much gratified; and at the conclusion of the service testified their welcome to us, when every individual man, woman, and child, came to shake hands with us at the door.

The general costume was that mixture of Indian and European now commonly met with among the tribes in proximity to the whites, one aged Indian alone, named 'Old Boar,' wearing the scalp-lock. In the course of the morning we visited many of the more remarkable men in their huts, and I was much affected to find the venerable interpreter Killbuck, watching the bed of his dying daughter, the last of twelve children. The stoicism of an Indian warrior might have rendered him equally calm, but Christian resignation gave a higher character to his demeanour, and lent him hope in the midst of his family desolation. He felt himself assured that he should meet his family again in lands where there would be no more hardships, nor sorrow, nor misery, nor oppression.

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[1] See Loskiel's History of the Indian Mission, or Holmes's History of the Missions of the Church of the Brethren.

The ruins of the old Settlement lie, as has already been mentioned, on the opposite side of the River, where the land is of a yet greater elevation; and the main road passes through it, over the head of a small wooded ravine crossed by a bridge. Many things combine to make it a site of great interest.

We wandered over one part of the open space formerly occupied by the dwellings. The general disposition might be traced by the small hollows or hillocks on the sod or among the bushes, and better by the little avenues or the detached groups of apple trees which have survived that wreck which had not left a single rafter or stone. We were shown the site of the Church and missionary dwellings, and deeper towards the forest among the thickening brushwood we marked the small field where depressed hillocks among the grass indicated the resting place of a little band of Christian Indians, who had left the world prior to the destruction of their peaceful Settlement, and before their friends and families, and their teachers, were scattered to the winds. Apart from these, yet further to the one side, under the shade of the forest, lay a row of more recent hillocks, the graves of Heathen, whose bodies had been brought here from a distance by their fellows, and deposited near what they believed to be hallowed ground.

Among those of this class who sleep within the shade of the Moravian Forest, not many miles from this spot, is one, whose name, character, and deeds will never be forgotten, as long as the Indian tribes of North America are remembered as a race.

The battle between the Americans under General Harrison and General Proctor, in October 1812, which was terminated by the defeat and retreat of the latter, took place a little to the westward of this Settlement, which was then open to the enemy, and consequently destroyed. Among those who fell on this occasion, was Tecumseh, one of the bravest and most extraordinary men on record among the Indian tribes; —and low and debased as they are now, they have produced some as extraordinary characters in their sphere as any race under the sun. The history of their decline, which, however accelerated by the advent of the whites to the country, seems to have commenced long before the grasping hand of the latter began to wrest their country from them,—is marked by the appearance and disappearance of such men, who united the talents, inherent in and congenial to the Indian character,—the natural growth of their social state, with those which are even of rare occurrence, in an equal degree, among nations styling themselves civilized and Christian. Philip of Pokanoket, whose history, as connected with the early troubles of the New England settlers, has been often expatiated upon, was distinguished in his time for the clear views which he seemed to have conceived as to the probable fate of his country and his race from the insidious advance of the whites: and the truth of his auguries was only equalled by the stern inflexibility of purpose with which he addressed himself, and directed all his forces of mind and body to their extirpation. He saw them comparatively few, occupying scattered settlements along the Atlantic border and its rivers, and he prepared his league for one mighty effort, by which he might crush the evil in the bud. He scorned to imitate the example of his predecessors, and of his neighbours, who for a handful of beads and tobacco, were selling their birth-right and the patrimony of their posterity; but with a silence and caution worthy of his race laboured secretly to effect his ulterior purpose. He probed the weakness of his foes, and estimated his own forces—he strengthened his confederacy, and was employed for years in preparation for that struggle, which, however dear it cost the whites, eventually terminated in their ascendancy, and the destruction of the mighty savage and his league.

Few among the high-minded characters of note, which for upwards of a century subsequently rose from time to time among the various Indian tribes, had the soul of Philip. The extent of their views, and the end of their schemes, and the sphere of their struggles, were less developed and more confined. The white advanced, and the Children of the Forest made room for him. The courage, the oratory, and the powers of mind of one hero after another were displayed in favour of their individual tribes, or it might be in behalf of their French, British, or American Father. Their eyes were blinded; it seemed that there was none among them who could glance calmly on the past and towards the future, and reflect that every Pale-face, whatever his name, his bearing, or his interests, was essentially the enemy of the Indian.

Yet such was Tecumseh. Growing up from early youth with that impression, he seems to have been born with the feeling stamped upon his strong and extraordinary mind, that, however self-interest might lead the one to flatter, and avarice and degeneracy incline the other to submit and to fall into the snare—there never had been, there never could be congeniality between the two races; and that the destruction of his own was inevitable, if the bonds between them were not totally broken. He now looked upon the state of the Indian tribes, scattered, degenerate, disunited, debauched; diminished in number, driven back for a thousand miles upon the Great River of the West and the broad Lakes,—but, late as it was in the day,—hopeless as would seem the attempt,—complicated as the meshes of the net he was about to weave might be—he seems to have devoted himself, his life, his strength, and his talent, to this great end: and how he laboured, and what he effected, when at a mature and ripened age he began to act upon the settled

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purpose of his life, there live yet hundreds who can tell. His acts from the first years of the present century, to the day of his death, form one of the most extraordinary tales of the West. This is not a place for a history,—but you shall have an outline in my next letter.

LETTER IX.

TECUMSEH was born among the Shawanees, a people celebrated among the Indian tribes for their savage demeanour and ferocity. Their ancient seat seems to have been much further to the southward than the territory in which they were found by the whites. By all the early accounts of the missionaries, and the settlers in the back parts of Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New York, they approved themselves among the most determinate enemies of the white population. In the war of the Revolution, they sided with the British. Little is known of the early life of Tecumseh, but that it was certainly an active and a troubled one, as he was just in the flush of his youth at the time that the American troops were expelling the hostile tribes from their native country in Ohio, and burning their villages behind them; and it is known that up to the signal defeat of the hostile tribes by General Wayne in 1795, the young warrior was among the foremost in carrying on that fearful warfare with the frontier settlers of Kentucky, of which I have made mention in an earlier letter. Tradition says, that from an early age he was distinguished

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among his fellows for his love of truth, his temperance, and his integrity, and the constancy with which he set his face against any approach to civilization, spurning alike the Pale-face and his gifts.

His character at the close of the war in question was that of a bold and skilful Indian warrior. His passion for glory had already become manifest, and was strongly contrasted with the love of gain which characterized his brave but degenerate companions. He was far from being blood-thirsty, and was always ready to save the lives of such as fell into his hands, having been known to slay one of his followers who acted contrary to his orders in this respect.

Tecumseh had a twin-brother whose name was Elskatawa—‘a fire that is moved from place to place’ afterwards better known by the designation of the Prophet; and there is reason to believe that at an early age they had communicated with each other with regard to those great plans which they subsequently co-operated in putting into execution; the main object of which was to combine the whole of the tribes of the Western Indians in an offensive and defensive league, to arrest the progress of the whites. To do this they must unite them, and put a stop to their internal feuds—they must undo what the white had done,—bring them back to their state of comparative simplicity and independence, and make them sen-

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[1] See Thatcher's Indian Biography.

sible of their real position with regard to the people who were gradually but surely displacing them from the soil, to which they and they alone, had a natural right.

It would appear that a coalition with the British, was no part of the great design of Tecumseh in the first instance, and that he never embraced that alternative till no other means seemed to be left him of attaining the great object of his life and thoughts. However that may be, it was soon after the commencement of the present century that the brothers came prominently forward on the scene.

Elskatawa commenced his personification of a Prophet, a common character among the Indians, and preached the doctrine of reform to the red men. He expatiated in his discourses upon the evils brought upon their race by the white men—the introduction of ardent spirits, diseases, contentions, wars; the vast diminution of their means of subsistence, and the narrow limits in which they were hemmed in. He painted the happy lives of their ancestors, and contrasted the present with the past. He then insisted upon the consequences that should result from a feeling of the truth of these statements—that there should be no more internal wars among them—that they should forswear the blankets and spirits of the Whites, and all the vices to which their neighbourhood had given rise, and that, as far as possible, they should return to the habits and simple garb of their forefathers. Growing bolder by the attention which this language could not fail to obtain, he forthwith laid claim to a special commission from the Great Spirit, and appealed to his juggling miracles as a proof of its validity. Nothing was left unattempted that could add to his individual authority or enforce his doctrines, all of which had the sole tendency to diminish the dependence of the Indian upon the white man and promote harmony and intercourse between the tribes. He flattered his own tribe by discourses and predictions—persuading them that the hour had come when the Master of Life would restore them to their pristine consequence and power. Tecumseh was of necessity considered as one of the first converts to the new doctrines promulgated by his inspired brother. Yet, though some accessions were gained from their own tribe and connections, for several years the converts were few in number, and their character wavering. Still the two brothers never lost sight of their ultimate design, but each furthered it in the course best suited to his individual character, with a perseverance and constancy which defection, indifference, or opposition could neither allay nor dishearten. Emissaries were sent into other tribes to spread the new doctrines and prepare the way for a general appeal to the Indians as one people and one race. Other, so-called prophets, arose far and near in apparent contradiction to the Shawanese, but still covertly in concert and calculated by their preconcerted defeat to shed greater lustre on him. The excitement gradually spread, and gaining power, the Prophet found himself about the year 1807, sufficiently popular to adopt a yet bôlder mode of proceeding.

The energy and courage of Tecumseh dictated to him a different course from that which the cunning and ingenuity of his brother had marked for himself. He, under sanction of the prevailing excitement which prepared the Indian to believe and obey, went boldly to work, and making use of the knowledge which he had been silently gaining of the state of the various tribes and tempers of their chiefs, found means to dispossess of their power such of the latter as were unfriendly to his scheme, or reduce them to the grade of private warriors. Others, it is believed, were dispatched.

Meantime the Prophet, calculating upon the innate and extreme horror which the Indian entertains of witchcraft, a horror which no rank, age, character or former services can counteract, began by accusing through his emissaries, many of the most influential among the chiefs of this diabolical vice, and such was the excitement, that when he went so far as to declare that the Great Spirit had endowed him with faculty of detecting those given to this sin, he was credited, and had 'only to nod to be obeyed.'

One aged and venerable chief after the other was now consigned to the flames. Men with heads covered with the grey hairs of seventy and eighty winters, having up to this moment been the objects of reverence and affection to their tribes, were unscrupulously sacrificed. Torture was employed to elicit confession. Several Christian Indians shared the same fate. Of one of the latter it is related that he was brought to the place of execution, and told, if he would confess his crime, and give up his 'medicine bag,' he would be pardoned. He answered, that he had nothing to confess, that he was a Christian, and had no connection with the devil! 'You have,' said he, alluding to the preceding sacrifice of an aged Delaware chief, 'intimidated one poor old man, but you cannot frighten me: proceed, and you shall see how a Christian and a warrior can die!' and, with a small hymn-book in his hand, he continued to sing and pray till his voice was stifled in the flames.

Tecumseh, though it is supposed he co-operated with his brother, so far as these acts might further the great end in view, was not partial to this mode of proceeding.

The notoriety of these circumstances, hidden as their ulterior object might be, made the American Government attentive to these indications of some secret movement among the Western Indians. The Prophet had about this time taken up his head quarters at Tippecanoe on the Wabash, and here his followers flocked together. Frequent conferences took place between him and the American officers in command at the neighbouring post of Vincennes, in which he stedfastly denied being under British influence, and contested that he had no object in view but the reform of the Indians, to reclaim them from evil, and cause them to live in peace and friendship; adding boldly that for this end he had been deputed by the Great Spirit. As yet nothing like open hostility could be proved against him and his followers.

In the course of 1810, it was evident that the power of this extraordinary individual continued to spread, at the same time that its decidedly hostile character towards the Americans seemed beyond a doubt, and much alarm existed among the frontier settlers. The Indian force collected about the residence of the prophet at Tippecanoe, was found, in the spring of the following year, to exceed any that the Governor of Vincennes could collect to oppose to it, should hostilities break out.

Tecumseh, of whose labours up to this time few could judge, became a more prominent character. His indignation had been roused by the recent sale of lands on the Wabash to the United States by the Delawares, Miamis, and other tribes, at a time when he had been absent on one of those long journeys which he performed to distant tribes, in pursuance of the scheme which his energetic mind had dwelt upon for years. He now came forward, and on occasion of a visit which he paid the Governor at Vincennes, boldly avowed his principles.

If the account handed down can be depended upon, he spoke in a strain of eloquence which must have vibrated on the souls of those who heard him, however opposed in interest and in sentiment. He there deplored that he could not make that use of his Red brethren which he had wished; but affirmed that if it were so, he should not come to the Governor, and ask him as he now did, to annul the Treaty which had been made,—but he would come and say to him, 'you have liberty to return to your own country!' He further said, that 'his spirit within told him that till within a few years, no white man had ever set his foot upon that Continent, that it had all belonged to the Red men, children of the same parents, placed on it by the Great Spirit that made them, to keep it, to traverse it, to enjoy its productions, and to fill it with the same race.' He apostrophized his people as 'once happy, but then made miserable by the encroachments of the whites,' and stated that 'the only way to check the evil, was for all the Red men to unite in claiming a common and equal right to the land, as it was at first, and yet should be; for it never was divided, but belonged to all for the use of each. That no part had a right to sell, even to each other, much less to strangers—who wanted all, and would not be satisfied with less than all.'

In this manner he contended that no tribe could cede land, which in fact the Great Spirit had given as a common possession to all his Red children, and that without the co-operation and full consent of all, the bargain made with part could not be legal.

These were no arguments however, to convince the Americans; and matters became more and more embroiled till the close of 1811, when, in the absence of Tecumseh in the South, the Prophet's followers were attacked and driven from their strong-hold at

Tippecanoe, by General Harrison, after a desperate struggle.

The explosion was premature, and was a terrible blow to the schemes of the master-spirit of his race. The Prophet daily declined in popularity, and Tecumseh henceforward seems to have acted independently of him. Up to this moment, it is probable that he had never yielded to the British offers of co-operation, but now he seems to have decided that he had no other alternative. From politic motives, he cloaked his intention for some months, even from the tribes, who now were divided into two parties, the one desirous of maintaining a strict neutrality in the war then waging between the United States and Great Britain, and of letting 'their two Fathers fight it out' and the other urging the policy of joining the British in common cause against the Americans. In a grand Council held among the tribes of the West at Mississinniway in the following spring (1812) when this subject was agitated, Tecumseh found himself in the minority, but that did not discourage him, and he and certain of the tribes openly joined the British.

At no time of his career was this brave and extraordinary man greater than at this epoch, when by the mismanagement of his brother, and his consequent decline in popularity, he saw the body of firm adherents, the gleanings of so many anxious years, slain, dispersed, disheartened, or weaned from his influence. He spurned the idea of failure and subjection, and at a time when there were hardly a hundred warriors at his command, he commenced his preparations for what proved his final struggle with an energy and loftiness of spirit, which have won the admiration of his very enemies.

In former years he had repeatedly visited the tribes on the banks of the Mississippi, upon the shores of the Great Lakes and the adjoining territories, and those in the south. He now travelled over all that vast extent of country once more—fulfilling his threat at his last interview with the Governor of Vincennes, that he would give no rest to his feet till he had united all the Red men in a resolution to perish in the field, unless the late Treaties, the validity of which he disputed, were annulled, and a compact entered into by which the Americans should bind themselves never to make further purchases of individual tribes, without the consent of all the Red race!

For many months, with invincible determination, he ranged the whole western and northern frontier, exciting the minds of the tribes by his energetic eloquence and self-devotion, and urging them to give their support to a cause which he would fain persuade them was the common cause of each and all. The force of his rhetoric, and the authority of his name, were not without their effect, and in their course of the autumn and early months of the following year, his single voice and unaided energy seemed to have roused the spirit of the Indians as a race for the last time. But it was written that the white man should possess the earth, and before the close of that year

(1813), the whole confederacy fell asunder—the keystone was crushed—and Tecumseh was no more!

He fell like an Indian warrior in the battle fought two miles lower down the river, combating with his comrades long after his white allies had deserted him. He is said to lie in a grave dug by the Indians a short time after the battle, on the borders of a swamp near the place where he fell, by the side of a huge prostrate oak. He might be called the Last of the Red Men—for since his time, the decline which he foresaw and strove to arrest, has proceeded with accelerated movement; and beaten back, debauched, and degraded—who or what shall now arrest the downward course of the Indian?

The preceding pages will have given you a brief and perhaps inadequate idea of the character of a high-minded Indian warrior, one whose aspirations were as much above that of the herd, as the energy and perseverance with which he attempted to grapple with the difficulties of his enterprise, were extraordinary. That spot of ground which has suggested the recollection of his history, naturally brings me back to the remembrance of another class of warriors, the history of whose lives evinces equal devotion, equal energy, equal perseverance, and yet higher aspirations, and they too fought on this very ground.

To us, as well as many in our Christian land, the tales of Missionary labour have been familiar from our youth up. We have been taught to value the devotion—

the simplicity of faith—the steadiness of purpose, and the purity of principle which leads the Missionary to forsake his home and country, with nothing but the clear and simple command of his Lord for his guide; and, with no eye to worldly advantage, to devote his days to a calling full of toil and privation, and frequently attended by bitter sorrow and disappointment. As I reminded you in my last letter, we have been favoured to see and know personally, men devoted to this holy purpose; both before they entered upon the service, and when, after long years spent in it, they returned with failing strength and limbs, but cheerful and contented spirits, to rest in the bosom of a Christian community, till their hour came to depart from the world. We have heard from their own lips of their joys and their griefs; and might form some idea of the trials and privations of their useful lives—but for my own part, I own that till the opportunity was afforded me to see for myself what the heathen soil was wherein they had to labour,—I never formed a conception of what missionary devotion, perseverance, toil, and suffering really were.

Look to the history of the early Moravian missionaries in North America. What did they not dare? What did they not meet? What did they not endure? They too, like Tecumseh, had one governing principle, one wish, one hope, to which all their powers and energies of body and mind were directed. Did he, in the long and wearisome pursuit of his great end, to free his degenerate race from the hated dependance on a strange people, encounter fatigue, mortification, travel, and privation, and dare death and captivity,—so did they, to a yet greater degree, foregoing their ease and their natural desires, suffering all things to give the Indian true light and true knowledge, and to deliver them from the thraldom of sin. Theirs was neither the bigoted zeal of the Spanish priest, armed with the sword, and compelling the poor Indians of the south to bow down before the cross,—nor that of the Puritan, burning with hatred against the heathen bands whom he believed he was destined to root out from the land. Their spirit was not one of mere proselytism, like that of many of the Catholic priests of the Canadas, who deemed the end of their mission gained, when the Indian had submitted to baptism, and consented to wear the cross and the rosary among his other trinkets;—they went forth to the desert unsupported by human power, with chastened zeal looking to total change of life for the sign of their labours being effectual; and, strong in their dependance on God, ready to do his will under all trials and all circumstances. And, during the century which has passed since the first members of the Brethren's church landed in Georgia,[1] and the Creek Indians first flocked with their chiefs to the banks of the Savannah river, to listen to the 'great word;'—what proofs have not been given to Christendom of the power of God, both in the lives and deaths of His messengers, and in the peaceful spread of His Gospel through such weak and apparently insignificant means.

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[1] A. D. 1735.

Of the two great hindrances to missionary labours which exist even at this day,—the natural repugnance of the savage to a change of life, and the evil influence and opposition to be experienced from the whites,—the latter has been at all times the most to be feared and to be lamented.

The sufferings endured by the Missionaries and the Indians under their care, from this source, from the very commencement, are hardly to be pictured.

The Indian, savage and sensual as he was; a slave to his own superstitions and vices, and still worse, to the vices introduced by the whites,—ungovernable in a moment of intoxication or anger, was nevertheless from the very first, in numerous and striking instances, impressed with the blameless life, the calmness, and the indifference to peril, evinced by the Missionary. He might be deaf to the Gospel,—but he was struck with the humility, the spirit of forgiveness for wrongs received, the constancy of the teacher,—and the peace with which he could lie down to sleep in the very wigwams of those who threatened his life. Many were led from this first natural feeling of surprise, to further reflection. A few sincere converts were in the course of time made from the Mohicans and Delawares, and the influence of their changed lives, and their consistency of character were felt by others. During the first fifteen years, in spite of the most persevering opposition from without, the increasing enmity of the whites, the constant attempt to incite the Indians against them, and to embroil them with Government, as disaffected persons,—the truth spread. Little flocks of Christian Indians were gathered on the frontiers of Pennsylvania and the neighbouring states; communication with more distant tribes was set on foot and maintained at the risk of life; and among many tribes, a general anxiety began to prevail, to have teachers among them, to let them also hear what the Delawares termed 'the sweet words of life.'

Several of the most distinguished members of the Brethren's church in Germany, came over to America to lend their aid and counsel; and among them Count Zinzendorf and Bishop Spangenburg, both of whom undertook repeated journeys of great length and peril in furtherance of this object.

The Great Council of the Five Nations at Onondaga had, from the beginning, been favourable to the Missionaries, and they formed a regular treaty with the Brethren. This both the Delawares and Shawanese did subsequently.

Whenever it happened that the steady persecution of the whites was continued beyond endurance, as was the case with the first little settlement, among the Mohicans, the Brethren bade adieu to their fields and buildings; and, rendering blessing for cursing, went forth with their flock deeper and deeper into the unknown West; pitched their 'tents of peace' near some distant stream, in simple reliance upon God's aid, evincing an intrepidity which even the godless Whites could not but admire.

At the breaking out of the French war, 1754, the whole of the Western Frontier of Pennsylvania became exposed to the attacks of the tribes in league with the French.

At this time a misconception of their views (how could their devotedness be understood by worldly people?) had caused a fierce outcry to be raised against the Brethren's Missionaries and their settlements throughout the country; and though the Colonial government, on examination, did them full justice, yet the populace was not to be persuaded but that they were in communication with the French. The public rage was turned against the Christian Indians. Many were sacrificed; but it pleased God that even this imputation of disloyalty should be taken away from his people, and that the accusation which they could not live down, should be washed out by their innocent blood; for, in the course of that year, the French Indians made an irruption upon the waters of the Susquehanna, and, surprising the inmates of the Mission-house on the Mahony, eleven of the Missionaries with their children were murdered.

At the renewal of peace, the Brethren resumed and continued their labours, first settling on the upper waters of the Susquehanna and the Alleghany river, and then establishing a communication with the Indian tribes on the Muskingum in Ohio.

As before, when driven from one post by the hatred of the Whites, they went deeper into the wilderness, where these dare not yet follow. During all the troubles of the succeeding Indian war and the war of the Revolution which followed in 1776, they and their Delawares persevered in remaining neuter in spite of the oppression that this conduct exposed them to from both parties in turn. Six of the Missionaries were compelled to repair to Sandusky and Detroit, but their scattered flock determined to share the fate of their Teachers, and forsaking their settlements on the Muskingum, followed them thither.

It was shortly after this dispersion, and during the continuance of the troubles,[1] that Gnadenhutten, one of these half abandoned Settlements in Ohio, in which a large congregation of believing Indians had been collected, became the scene of an act of such barbarous and shameless atrocity, as is almost without parallel in modern times, when we consider that those who perpetrated it were called Christians.

Many of the refugees at Sandusky, pressed by hunger, had returned to their former place of abode, to reap the produce of their fields, and were joined by others of the scattered flock,—when a number of the lawless and ruthless white inhabitants of the adjoining States, banded secretly together, surprised the unsuspecting and unoffending inhabitants of the peaceful settlement, bound them, and then, in cold blood,

[1] A. D. 1782.

tting apart two of the dwellings for their butchery, d out their unresisting Indian captives of both sexes, nd pitilessly murdered and scalped the whole body the number of ninety-six, leaving their village in ames. The scene I leave to your imagination. he very murderers owned that they died like Chris- ans, and sang and prayed with their last breath;— lding, that they had killed them, not because they ere Christians, but because they were Indians!

The cry of the innocent blood which arose from at polluted spot of earth, was not raised in vain!

Still trouble followed the steps of the Mission- ries; in a short time they were torn from their ock at Sandusky by the orders of the British Go- ernment of the province, and an utter stop seemed be put to the progress of the mission. Two irds of the Christian Delawares had escaped the te of their brethren on the Muskingum by their ight to Sandusky, and no sooner had they now been attered afresh, than God was pleased to show them at the hand which cast them abroad once more, was e of mercy and not of wrath; for when the band of urderers in pursuance of their diabolical plans arrived the latter place, they found none remaining to wreck eir vengeance upon:—and in returning to the south- ard, it is on record, that they were in turn attacked y a body of English and Indians, and the greater art of them cut off from the face of that earth which ey had so fearfully polluted.

The Missionaries were kindly treated by the English

Government, and left at perfect liberty to return into Pennsylvania, but they would not forsake their flock; and in 1782 settled on the shores of Lake Huron. The Christian Indians, long persecuted like hunted deer, were collected with great difficulty, and even from this period, 1782, till ten years after the peace, when the majority settled with their faithful teachers on the spot where I suppose that we now stand, they continued to be involved in unceasing trials and difficulties. Various new positions were proposed and taken possession of for a time, but all had to be ultimately relinquished from necessity; till finally, at the invitation of the British Government they crossed Lake Erie, and built their peaceful settlement in these forests. At the close of the century, Fairfield consisted of fifty houses, and contained one hundred and fifty inhabitants; and they annually furnished the North West company with a large quantity of maize, maple-sugar, beef, and other provisions. The whole country was benefited by their industry.

About this time (1798) David Zeisberger, then in the seventy-eighth year of his age, having never forsaken the Delawares throughout all these trials, incited by the invitation of the American Congress to return to the Old Settlements on the Muskingum, removed with several Indian families thither.

During the lapse of so many years the wilderness had reclaimed its own. The ancient settlements were only discoverable by occasional ruins overgrown by the thickets, but the scene of the murder was too distinguishable, and many a tear was shed over the bones of these Indian martyrs by their brethren, and by the failing eyes of the venerable missionary, by whom most of the slain had been gathered together as a Christian flock. A small Settlement, Goshen, was ultimately built in their vicinity, and here the aged patriarch, Zeisberger, blind, but retaining all his faculties, closed his laborious and useful career ten years after. The machinations of both the Whites and Indians prevented this settlement from prospering like its predecessors, but the inhabitants were favoured to remain in peace. A small offset established among the Delawares on the Wabash was broken up on account of the troubles brought upon them by the machinations of the Prophet. Their little congregation had to fly, and the only Indian at length remaining with the Missionaries, a sober and exemplary Christian, was accused of witchcraft and burnt at the stake.

Meanwhile the parent Settlement at Fairfield was subjected to the vicissitudes of war as related, and after a period of twenty years' tranquillity, was completely razed and destroyed by the American army under General Harrison. The Indians fled, and the Missionaries, stripped and robbed, though left at liberty, were forced to separate. Two of their number repaired to Detroit, and thence to Pennsylvania, while the third with his family remained in Canada, to share the fate of the Indians, whatever that might be. After the retreat of the Americans, many of the latter returned to seek their teacher, and they then made good their retreat to Lake Ontario, where they formed a settlement and built for themselves a chapel, occupying the same till the close of the war, when they returned to the vicinity of the old Settlement, and New Fairfield, as it now stands, was planned and built. In process of time the mission on the Muskingum had to be broken up, and the small remnant of Christian Delawares rejoined their brethren in Canada.

I have thus ventured to remind you by this brief outline, of the labours of the Brethren's Church in this part of the world. The baptismal register of the mission, up to the period of Zeisberger's death, would number between thirteen and fourteen hundred Indians of these tribes upon its page, as Christians in life and death—a small number truly after the labours of three quarters of a century, but sufficient to show that God was with them; that the labour, devotion, and constancy of the Missionaries, and the faith of the Church from which they were sent forth, were not in vain.

But I must no longer linger here, but lead you by a continuation of the main route down the valley of the Thames to the town of Chatham, where the river becomes navigable, and thence to the sandy shores of Lake St. Clair, whence we soon reached the city of Detroit.

LETTER X.

At this time our whole schemes of autumnal travel had to undergo revision. We found on our arrival at Detroit, that no steam-boats were likely to ascend the Great Lakes at this season of the year; and though we might have got passage to the head of Lake Huron, or to Green Bay, on board one of the sloops which navigate Lakes Huron and Michigan, the delay consequent upon awaiting a fitting opportunity, and the long and uncertain voyage, were both reasons why we should prefer pursuing another.

Hearing therefore that a treaty with the Indian tribes of the Pottawattomies was expected to take place at Chicago, towards the lower extremity of Lake Michigan, and that means might be found to cross the state of Illinois to the valley of the Mississippi, we resolved upon proceeding to Chicago.

A public vehicle conveyed us across the peninsula of Michigan, over a tract of country, which five or six years ago, had been traversed by nothing but Indian trails, but which was now rapidly filling with a settled population from the eastward, and all the concomitants of ploughed land, girdled trees, log-huts,—towns, villages, and farms.

As far as the town of Niles, the route was good. But here we had to change the regular stage for an open vehicle of a stronger build, furnished with three or four rows of rude spring-seats.

Before I proceed to mention the incidents of the latter part of our journey, I may observe that the surface of the peninsula is very varied, and part of it, in Hillsdale county for instance, abounds in the most beautiful natural park scenery you can conceive. A more lovely undulating country, covered with rich grass, interspersed with forest or groups of trees, and varied by limpid lakes, we never beheld. As we advanced, the prairies increased in number and size; and among them the traveller notices as a remarkable feature of the country, the wide meadows containing a perfectly level and unbroken area of several square miles, surrounded by dense forests. They have all the appearance of being the beds of lakes long dried up, raised by the accumulation of vegetable matter and rubbish washed down from the bluffs, and are generally found to consist of the very richest soil. The most extensive over which we passed, was the White Pigeon Prairie, a tract, upon which, four years before, there was not a single white inhabitant, but which was now completely occupied by one hundred and sixty flourishing farms.

As far as Niles on St. Joseph's river, our journey had been conducted without adventure.

From thence it was calculated that two days' journey would bring us to Chicago. By this time a steam-boat communication has been probably established between St. Joseph's river and Chicago; but as it was, we had to follow the old Indian trail for a hundred miles, round the lower southern shores of the lake. Twelve hour's rough jolting, brought us to a farm about twenty miles from the extremity of Lake Michigan, and about sixty-five from Chicago, if I recollect right; and here we took up our night quarters, preparatory to a day's journey, which was called the most difficult of the whole, and so in truth we found it.

The middle of September was passed, and hitherto the season had favoured us. Yet the steady warm weather which distinguishes the North American summer, had been for some time on the decline, and during our passage of Upper Canada earlier in the month, we began already to note the first indications of the gradual approach of the fall of the year.

The maize fields appeared utterly deprived of their luxuriant verdure, and were turned to a pale yellow, while the dry and crisp leaves rustled incessantly in the morning wind; bright shocks of wheat studded the cultivated lands, and the buck-wheat fields were now of a deep brown, and without perfume.

The leaves of the maple began to turn orange, and those of the sumac bright red. The air was filled with thistle down, floating hither and thither, guided by the hand of God to the place of its future home.

The frog and the catydid were silent;—the prairies swarmed with winged grasshoppers, green, red, and yellow. The gay flowers of the summer had shed their petals and had fallen to seed, while above them rose the tall and gaudy sun-flower tribe, clothing the prairie with gold. The asters and gentiana were all seen in full flower, and in the damp forest the fungus sprung into existence from the fibres of the decaying tree.

Ten days later, on the morning of our early departure in the open and uneasy vehicle from the farm last mentioned, as we plunged into a tract of a deep forest, called the Ten Mile Wood, many further tokens of the advancing fall were added. The air was full of the boding sounds of autumn. Heavy clouds hung low upon the earth, and deepened the shades of the labyrinth of tall towering trees, oak, beech, and black walnut,—beneath whose covert we were seemingly buried. As we toiled along the deep narrow trail in the dim green twilight below, occasional blasts might be heard agitating the upper branches, and sending down a pattering shower of heavy drops into the depths of the forest. About us every thing betokened decay: mouldering stumps; prostrate trees falling to powder, half shrouded in fungi and moss; dying grass and leaves. Ever and anon a growl of distant thunder echoed through the solitude, and occasionally a bright mournful gleam would be cast down upon us from the bright changing foliage clothing the upper branches of some giant tree.

Every bird seemed snug in its covert; the cat-bird and the whip-poor-will were silent, and even the gay blue jay had ended his shrill bickerings with his mates.

For four hours were we toiling through this unbroken belt of forest, and then emerged upon a little opening, with its scattered oaks, lake, log-houses, and clearing; where a short halt was absolutely necessary for the four horses which formed our team. Much precious time was, however, wasted here from the loss of a package of bedding from the tail of our waggon, in search of which a man had to ride back many miles into the forest.

We now got on five miles further to the Calemeck Creek, where we had another halt, and a feud, arising from one of the party wishing to remain here all night, rather than commence at that period of the day, the passage of a tract which we were told would be upwards of thirty miles of most dreary road along the southern margin of Lake Michigan, without the possibility of shelter.

But it is time to introduce you to the dramatis personæ.

Our long and narrow vehicle was furnished with four seats, one behind the other. The first was occupied by the driver, a good-natured young man, whose capacity in the guidance of his four steeds over stump and logs was no way inferior to those of his craft, characterized in former letters. By his side sat a heavy Pennsylvanian farmer, on a land-hunting expedition; a man of few words and apparently few ideas, for the

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only speech of his which is on record, was uttered about noon on the second day's journey, when he suddenly asked, 'Does cattle in this country die o' the morran, sir?' and he was instantly set a musing for the rest of the journey by the answer, 'No!' which was promptly returned by his neighbour.

On the second bench sat, with a fine noble greyhound at their feet, an original couple, man and wife; of whom I knew nothing till the morning of this day, which you will find is likely to be a long one.

We had noticed that the husband was a hale, upright old man, probably upwards of seventy, and the wife like most American wives of her class, very retiring and silent. Now and then, as we rolled swiftly and noiselessly along, over a level piece of prairie, I had distinguished the voice of the man, uttering divers shrewd, and even original sentences; interlarded by an abundance of profane oaths. But, as before observed, we had not as yet come sufficiently in contact to know much about him, the more so as in Major W. an officer of the staff of the United States' Army, who sat on the third bench, (while that in the rear was occupied by Pourtales and myself,) we had the society of a most accomplished and gentlemanly man, with regard to whom we had only one regret, that our intercourse was so brief. His neighbour was an original in his way also; a back-settler, as good-natured as it is possible for a man to be, but a bore in every sense of the word. His name I cannot record, but he went among us by the sobriquet of 'Snipe,' from the peculiar form of his nose, and the manner in which he would push it forward into every conversation. He was on his way to Chicago, to be present at the impending Treaty, with a view to prefer certain claims to the Government Commissioner for the loss of hogs, which, doubtless, the wolves had eaten; but which, no matter, the Indians might be made to pay for.

Captain John Cook, (such we found was the 'given-name' and patronymic of the male occupant of the second bench,) a New-Yorker, and moreover a Revolutionary hero, became an object of attention at the termination of the Ten Mile Wood, when he came prominently forward as the proprietor of the lost bedding; and we were sorry to find that he was principally distinguished for the extreme intemperance, bitterness, and profanity, with which his language, otherwise both shrewd and witty, was spiced. Though the loss of time was a serious matter to us under the circumstances, yet it may be conceived that we yielded with a good grace to the necessity, and waited patiently till his baggage had been recovered. Little thanks, however, we got for it. At the Calemeck, it was determined by the majority in opposition to his opinion, that we ought to proceed, as the weather, though threatening, was not bad, and might be worse.—And forward we went.

The approach to the shores of the great Lake was first notified by the rising sandy hillocks covered with white oak and pine. By degrees these were surmounted, and we arrived at the back of the huge white, bare, sand-hills, which, rising abruptly to the height of two hundred feet with a breadth of a mile and upwards, hem in the wide sweeping waste of waters, and form the line of division between the strand and the fertile country further inland: they present a striking spectacle. One by one, as our strength gave us advantage, our party descended from them to the beach, and it was long before the waggon followed with the aged couple. Two or three other pedestrians had come forward with us from the Calemeck.

The aspect of the broad expanse of the lake swelling to the horizon, and for hundreds of miles beyond, was sublime, but it was hardly beautiful. A narrow band of sand, with a few trees, stretching away from us to the east and west, and a shore strewed with huge trunks of trees and the wrecks of boats and vessels bleached with wind and wave, formed the sandscape. All vegetation appeared choked by the fine white sand, swept up from the deeps, and gradually driving back the waters by its rise and accumulation.

The total absence of harbours round this southern extremity of the lake, has caused the wreck of many a vessel, as the action of a storm from the northward upon such a wide expanse of fresh waters is tremendous; and from the great height and violence of the surf which then thunders in upon the base of the sand hills—and the utter solitude of this coast, lives are seldom if ever saved.

From the nature of the soil no regular road can ever be constructed. After a storm, when the waves have beat the strand, and made it compact and firm, a light carriage may travel with ease, but as we found it, nothing could have been more fatiguing both for the poor horses and ourselves; and it was soon seen that long before we could reach a human habitation we should be benighted.

Hour succeeded hour, and we seemed to be making no progress, as we crawled along in the shallow edge of the waters where the sand was hardest. The evening was calm, and the clear waters of the lake rippled to our feet in short waves. A band of splendidly illuminated clouds appeared rising from the water line to the northward, growing brighter and brighter till sun set, when, as the twilight thickened, and they grew faint, a bright stream of lightning flickered along the horizon to the N. and N.E. The deep blue shade of the rising thunder clouds settled down deeper and deeper upon the surface of the lake below them, as night drew on. Then came a spectacle such as we shall probably never see again. About eight o'clock, as we crawled along the yielding sand, high towering masses of cloud, piled one upon another far into the heavens, were seen reared over the lake, while the level horizon of the latter was indicated in the thickening gloom by the blood-red lightening which shot momentarily at the base. On the other hand the crescent of a sickly moon was struggling with broken layers of dark clouds.

Suddenly a broad luminous arch appeared rising like magic from the northward towards the zenith, spanning the thunder clouds, and drawing after it a number of quivering and shifting perpendicular rays through which the great northern constellations gleamed, now faint, then bright. It was the Aurora Borealis, and there it continued to hang, alternately shifting its streamers from east to west, and from west to east, while the reflection of its flickering light moved duskily in accordance with it from one side of the liquid mirror to another.

But there was one element of this mingled scene of beauty and sublimity, which soon got the ascendancy; and after half an hour's pause, during which we owned we had never seen a spectacle of such a peculiar character, both light and shade were confounded in the quick broad glare of the nearer tempest, as bursting over the water, it sailed slowly with its veil of mist across the heavens to the eastward. A second echoing storm which almost instantly followed, moved further to the south; and involving us for an hour in its insufferable glare, deluged us with rain. Three others followed, with half an hour's interval between each, and when at eleven o'clock the last went off reverberating among the sand-hills to the eastward, leaving the sky comparatively clear, twinkling with stars and still traversed by a few fading rays of the Aurora borealis, –our coachman, whose good humour nothing had broken, told us that further advance was utterly impossible. We had of course walked the greater part of the time since we passed the Calemeck, and it was said we were still fifteen miles from the nearest human habitation. However, we might as well walk on, as lie on the wet sand; and Pourtales, Snipe, a Canadian, and myself, started forward.

I have had, as you know, my share of walking, rough and smooth; but such a march I am by no means desirous of repeating. The even beach, which we had hitherto taken advantage of, by walking within the water-line, was now at an end, and as we proceeded we had to choose between a band of deep soft sand on the higher part of the shore or a steep bank of minute pebbles heaped up many feet in thickness close to the water; advance upon either of which in the darkness, was accompanied by an expenditure of strength quite out of proportion with the progress which our most desperate efforts could effect.

However, to move forward was the only alternative. Towards the close of the first hour after midnight our little band had become scattered, from the difference of strength and perseverance; when, plunging doggedly forward wrapt up in my own thoughts, and only bent on reaching a human habitation, whence aid might be sent to the party;—a slight noise made me halt, lift up my eyes, and it was with a degree of surprise which you may imagine, that I found myself standing close to a blanketted figure of a painted Pottawattomie Indian, leading a horse. His surprise seemed equal to mine. We stared at each other for an instant, uttered one monosyllabic salutation, and passed;—half a mile back he stumbled upon Pourtales and the Canadian, who, in spite of his being as deaf as a post, struck a bargain with him for his nag; and they shortly after passed me, both mounted on the back of the hardy little animal. Many long and fatiguing miles still remained, but I scrambled on in silence, and in about two hours after, gained the cluster of log-cabins where my comrade had some time preceded me, and was laudably engaged in attempting to prevail upon the inmates to give us some food. Bread and whiskey, with a few potatoes, were all that could be obtained, and that not without a world of persuasion and trouble; and thus refreshed, we laid down on the floor, and tried to get a little rest; not however before we had dispatched the Indian back to our laggards with some corn for the horses, and bread and whiskey for our fellow-passengers. Every square foot of flooring in both huts was crowded with occupants.

It was some time after day break, when, though awake, having shut my ears pertinaciously for a while to the continued talking around, and been trampled on by divers passengers from one corner of the hut to another, I was reminded by a hearty kick, that it was advisable to rise, and see how matters were going on.

The waggon had just arrived, having got forward no one could tell how.

Captain John Cook was holding forth to a crowd of about a dozen stragglers apparently convened together, to discuss some subject of importance, but which we had not the leisure, at first, to pay attention to. He had consoled himself for the mischances of the night by repeated drams, and now was just in that state when the strings of both the tongue and of reason seem to be endued with uncommon elasticity. His earnestness rose higher and higher, and his gesticulations became more and more violent;—and about the time that the horses were put to the waggon, and we were preparing to proceed, our curiosity was sufficiently excited to make us attentive to what was going on. Imagine our astonishment, when we found that we ourselves were the subject of his declamation. A dislike, which he seems to have conceived to us as Europeans, from the very first moment we had taken quiet possession of the rearward seat of the vehicle, had been gathering strength day by day. It had been incited from the circumstance, of our not having been aware of the fall of his bedding from the tail of the waggon; and this hidden combustion had been fanned by his discovery at the Calemeck, that though foreigners, and, as he judged, Britishers,—we had gained the good-will and respect of the driver and the other passengers. To us he ascribed his defeat in attempting to detain the party at that place, and consequently the disaster and fatigue of the ensuing night,—though we surely had suffered more than himself and his good helpmate, who had all along kept their seats in the waggon, and had been as well protected as circumstances admitted of. The rain had acted, like water upon quick-lime, upon his mixture of old prejudices, self-love, offended dignity, and dislike; and after the morning draughts of whiskey the smouldering flame burst into the air. We found him engaged addressing the people around with inconceivable gravity, with a rigmarole of matter; partly descriptive, so far as it related to the Revolutionary war—his own achievements therein—the bloody battles he had seen in his youth, especially that of Long Island: partly didactic, insomuch as it embodied dissertations upon the superexcellence of the free government of America, over that of all other countries; and partly pathetic, in so far as he made many appeals to the good sense and patriotism of those around, that they would not suffer themselves to be cheated of their privileges, by two strangers who were come to establish foreign despotism among them. This, mixed up with all kinds of digressions such as democratic politicians are wont to indulge in, when combined with the real wit, angry feeling, and tipsy volubility of the tall, lank, old man, his immoveable earnestness and the mysterious tone of his feeble voice, as he enforced his discourse upon the attention of all, ourselves included, flourishing a dram-glass in his hand,—was ludicrous enough. Finding that he was pulling out more stops, to wit, the trumpet, cornet, and sesquialtra,—efforts were made by the bystanders to get him to mount into the waggon, but for some time without success. We not only took it in good part, and without reply, as every one appeared inclined to do, but I may truly say it would have been with the best inclination to enjoy the exhibition, had it not been for his poor wife, who showed by her continual mute endeavours to bring him to order, how much ashamed she was of the conduct of her mate, and for our kind acquaintance Major W. whose vexation, at the same time that it was unnecessary, was that which every gentleman would have felt in like circumstances.

The man was old, drunk, and angry; what better excuse could have been made for him. His surprise at meeting with no sympathy from the by-standers seemed without bounds; and with the conviction that we must have thrown a spell over them also, he took his seat on the carriage. The Major, Mrs. Cook, Snipe, and many of the by-standers all tried to persuade him to be quiet; but silence could not be imposed on him. When we set off, in spite of the jolting, he would continue declaiming, and as all he said was repeated at least twenty times during the ensuing hour, my memory has preserved a specimen. You will remember our relative positions. 'Is it to be borne,' said Captain Cook, striving to rise and stand up in the waggon, and gesticulating violently. 'Is it to be borne that they should rule all things—that they should come here to nullify our glorious Revolution—to change our sentimental ideas of revolutionary principles. Is it'—Here a jolt, combined with his wife's incessant pulling at his coat-skirts, brought him rudely down on his seat. 'Is it thus,' continued he, after bending down, and throwing a fierce look into the recesses of the funnel-shaped bonnet which shaded the lineaments of his better half—' that they think to come and teach us ideas of liberty? They talk of their pompous kings and princes, and lords and governments—but we are the true *libertines.* They think to rule and govern us—we'll fight them, from a cannon to a darning-needle—we'll teach them to know the difference between the Pope and Tom Bell—we'll curtail their pomposity!' After this close, which was the ordinary manner in which he concluded a long sentence, he commonly slurred round on his seat, and glancing between Snipe and the Major, cast upon us a look of indescribably ludicrous menace, much to our entertainment. To his wife, whose attempts to quiet him were unceasing, he returned most bitter language—accusing her of being 'an old Tory from her youth, and born in New Brunswick, where they eat nothing but stewed buckskin inexpressibles and Irish potatoes!' On Snipe, who good-naturedly interfered, he bestowed a torrent of abuse. The Major and the driver had in vain tried to bring him to reason. At length, the patience of the latter was worn out; he suddenly drew up, and turning round, addressed the pugnacious old soldier as follows:—

'Mister Cook,—you may be Captain, and revolutionary Hero, or what you will, but I'll have done with this. What have those gentlemen done to you or your's—when have they given you a wrong word that they should have this abuse? If they are Englishmen, they have been civil and obliging, and kept good-humoured all the road, and done as others, and shown no airs; and as long as they do that, they desarve to travel in peace and quiet, and not have such a wicked foul-mouthed old fellow let loose upon them; and that they shall do. And so if you cannot hold your tongue, you'll get down and walk; and I'd have seen you out in no time long ago, were it not for your good wife there.'

This decided speech and demeanour in our conductor, backed by a strong and indignant remonstrance from the Major, and the twitchings of his wife, had some effect. Still for a few miles he continued in an under tone to maunder and declaim, and then stoop down and peep into his wife's bonnet; while now and then a few words of pathetic import about 'the sentimental ideas of revolutionary principles' would be borne aft, and a chuckle about 'curtailing our pomposity!' followed by a sudden turn and a comic glance of wrath and indignation upon us. With this single exception, and that only remembered for its ludicrous character—far and long as we travelled in the United States, no word of insult or bravado was ever addressed to me as an Englishman. It is only recorded for your amusement, and in consideration of the picture being unique.

From my personal observation, I should say that the prevailing spirit in America towards England was far from hostile, and that there was every disposition to welcome and return that kindness of feeling and mutual confidence and respect, which should grow up between us. You have only to look to facts instead of listening to the silly vapouring of the newspapers or reviews. I should opine that this has always existed, and that in spite of all the dislike and jealousy professed by Americans, in times which we trust are gone by, for their mother country; of the ridicule they have received in retaliation; and despite the real or affected preference which it was the fashion to profess for the French—for why? because France, to suit her own purposes, at the commencement of their revolution, chose to sympathize with America, and take part with her against England, and because certain of her generous-hearted sons came and shared in their struggle. The latter might be true champions of liberty,—but what was there in the government of Louis to make them believe that he loved America because he loved liberty. And richly France earned her deserts for this false-hearted interference. She too would make herself free, and snatched the cup from the hand of her ally—but the draught which had been a strengthening one to the men who shared English blood—English prudence—English principle, and English common sense—was too strong for the volatile Gaul. America, too, might have learned, at a later period, if she had not been too proud, what was the value of French friendship, and how much real affinity there was between them and the French as a nation. But from her quondam ally she bore cool insult after insult—greater than any she had suffered from the parent country, and yet would claim affinity with France, and speak as if they had community of views and feelings. It would be doing the people of the United States injustice to believe them. What have they or would they have in common with France, to graft upon their national character,—French genius, versatility, taste in the luxuries and elegances of life? If they can get them without getting more it will be well. Would they have French volatility,—flippancy,—sensuality and impiety—the subserviency to ridicule—scornful disregard of God's law—open contempt for social and moral order—profligacy—or inbred impatience of rule and just government? Let them look to England for some signs of the insane desire to amalgamate with and copy France,—an infatuation which will not confine itself to mere passion for change in political questions and arrangements, but will show its baneful operation in the whole mass of society—in the bosom of our families, and in the conduct and principles of our children.

When within five miles of Chicago, we came to the first Indian encampment. Five thousand Indians were said to be collected round this little upstart village, for the prosecution of the Treaty by which they were to cede their lands in Michigan and Illinois, and of this you shall hear more in my next.

LETTER XI.

I HAVE been in many odd assemblages of my species, but in few, if any, of an equally singular character as with that in the midst of which we spent a week at Chicago.

This little mushroom town is situated upon the verge of a perfectly level tract of country, for the greater part consisting of open prairie lands, at a point where a small river whose sources interlock in the wet season with those of the Illinois, enters Lake Michigan. It however forms no harbour, and vessels must anchor in the open lake, which spreads to the horizon to the north and east, in a sheet of unbroken extent.

The river, after approaching nearly at right angles, to within a few hundred yards of the lake, makes a short turn, and runs to the southward parallel to the beach. Fort Dearborn and the light-house, are placed at the angle thus formed. The former is a small stockaded enclosure with two block-houses, and is garrisoned by two companies of infantry. It had been nearly abandoned till the late Indian war on the frontier made its occupation necessary. The upstart village lies chiefly on the right bank of the river above the fort. When the proposed steamboat communication between Chicago and the St. Joseph's river, which lies forty miles distant across the lake, is put into execution, the journey to Detroit may be effected in three days, whereas we had been upwards of six on the road.

We found the village on our arrival crowded to excess, and we procured with great difficulty a small apartment; comfortless, and noisy from its close proximity to others, but quite as good as we could have hoped for.

The Pottawattomies were encamped on all sides,—on the wide level prairie beyond the scattered village, beneath the shelter of the low woods which chequered them, on the side of the small river, or to the leeward of the sand hills near the beach of the lake. They consisted of three principal tribes with certain adjuncts from smaller tribes. The main divisions are, the Pottawattomies of the Prairie and those of the Forest, and these are subdivided into distinct villages under their several chiefs.

The General Government of the United States, in pursuance of the scheme of removing the whole Indian population westward of the Mississippi, had empowered certain gentlemen to frame a Treaty with these tribes, to settle the terms upon which the cession of their Reservations in these States should be made.

A preliminary council had been held with the chiefs some days before our arrival. The principal Commissioner had opened it, as we learnt, by stating, that, 'as their Great Father in Washington had heard that they wished to sell their land, he had sent Commissioners to treat with them.' The Indians promptly answered by their organ, 'that their Great Father in Washington must have seen a bad bird which had told him a lie, for that far from wishing to sell their land, they wished to keep it.' The Commissioner, nothing daunted, replied: 'that nevertheless, as they had come together for a Council, they must take the matter into consideration.' He then explained to them promptly the wishes and intentions of their Great Father, and asked their opinion thereon. Thus pressed, they looked at the sky, saw a few wandering clouds, and straightway adjourned *sine die*, as the weather is not clear enough for so solemn a council.

However, as the Treaty had been opened, provision was supplied to them by regular rations; and the same night they had had great rejoicings,—danced the war-dance, and kept the eyes and ears of all open by running howling about the village.

Such was the state of affairs on our arrival. Companies of old warriors might be seen sitting smoking under every bush; arguing, palavering, or 'powwowing,' with great earnestness; but there seemed no possibility of bringing them to another Council in a hurry.

Meanwhile the village and its occupants presented a most motley scene.

The fort contained within its palisades by far the most enlightened residents, in the little knot of officers attached to the slender garrison. The quarters here consequently were too confined to afford place of residence for the Government Commissioners, for whom and a crowd of dependents, a temporary set of plank huts were erected on the north side of the river. To the latter gentlemen we, as the only idle lookers on, were indebted for much friendly attention; and in the frank and hospitable treatment we received from the inhabitants of Fort Dearborn, we had a foretaste of that which we subsequently met with everywhere under like circumstances, during our autumnal wanderings over the Frontier. The officers of the United States Army have perhaps less opportunities of becoming refined than those of the Navy. They are often, from the moment of their receiving commissions, after the termination of their Cadetship at West Point, and at an age when good society is of the utmost consequence to the young and ardent, exiled for long years to the posts on the Northern or Western frontier, far removed from cultivated female society, and in daily contact with the refuse of the human race. And this is their misfortune—not their fault;—but wherever we have met with them, and been thrown as strangers upon their good offices, we have found them the same good friends and good company.

But I was going to give you an inventory of the contents of Chicago, when the recollection of the warm-hearted intercourse we had enjoyed with many fine fellows whom probably we shall neither see nor hear of again, drew me aside.

Next in rank to the Officers and Commissioners, may be noticed certain store-keepers and merchants resident here; looking either to the influx of new settlers establishing themselves in the neighbourhood, or those passing yet farther to the westward, for custom and profit; not to forget the chance of extraordinary occasions like the present. Add to these a doctor or two, two or three lawyers, a land-agent, and five or six hotel-keepers. These may be considered as stationary, and proprietors of the half a hundred clapboard houses around you.

Then for the birds of passage, exclusive of the Pottawattomies, of whom more anon—and emigrants and land-speculators as numerous as the sand. You will find horse-dealers, and horse-stealers,—rogues of every description, white, black, brown, and red—half-breeds, quarter-breeds, and men of no breed at all;—dealers in pigs, poultry, and potatoes;—men pursuing Indian claims, some for tracts of land, others, like our friend Snipe, for pigs which the wolves had eaten;—creditors of the tribes, or of particular Indians, who know that they have no chance of getting their money, if they do not get it from the Government agents;—sharpers of every degree; pedlars, grog-sellers; Indian agents and Indian traders of every description, and Contractors to supply the

Pottawattomies with food. The little village was in an uproar from morning to night, and from night to morning; for, during the hours of darkness, when the housed portion of the population of Chicago strove to obtain repose in the crowded plank edifices of the village, the Indians howled, sang, wept, yelled, and whooped in their various encampments. With all this, the whites seemed to me to be more pagan than the red men.

You will have understood, that the large body of Indians, collected in the vicinity, consisted not merely of chiefs and warriors, but that in fact the greater part of the whole tribe were present. For where the warrior was invited to feast at the expense of Government, the squaw took care to accompany him;—and where the squaw went, the children or pappooses, the ponies, and the innumerable dogs followed;—and here they all were living merrily at the cost of the Government.

The features of the Pottawattomies are generally broad and coarse; their heads large, and their limbs fuller than the Osages. Among their warriors you rarely see one with the head shaved, retaining nothing but the scalp-lock. On the contrary, they wear it bushy and long, frequently plaited into long tails, sometimes hanging back in the nape of the neck, and at others over the face in front. Their sculls are remarkably flat behind.

Of their dress, made up as it is of a thousand varieties of apparel, but little general idea can be given. There is nothing among them that can be called a national costume. That has apparently long been done away with, or at least so far cloaked under their European ornaments, blankets, and finery, as to be scarcely distinguishable. Each seemed to clothe him or herself as best suited their individual means or taste. Those who possessed the means, were generally attired in the most fantastic manner, and the most gaudy colours. A blanket and breech-cloth was possessed with a very few exceptions by the poorest among the males. Most added leggings, more or less ornamented, made of blue, scarlet, green, or brown broad-cloth; and surcoats of every colour and every material; together with rich sashes, and gaudy shawl or handkerchief-turbans.

All these diverse articles of clothing, with the embroidered petticoats and shawls of the richer squaws and the complicated head-dress, were covered with innumerable trinkets of all descriptions, thin plates of silver, beads, mirrors, and embroidery. On their faces, the black and vermillion paint was disposed a thousand ways, more or less fanciful and horrible. Comparatively speaking, the women were seldom seen gaily drest, and dandyism seemed to be more particularly the prerogative of the males, many of whom spent hours at the morning toilet. I remember seeing one old fool, who, lacking other means of adornment and distinction, had chalked the whole of his face and bare limbs white.

All, with very few exceptions, seemed sunk into the lowest state of degradation, though some missionary efforts have been made among them also, by the American Societies. The Pottawattomie language is emphatic; but we had no means of becoming acquainted with its distinctive character, or learning to what class of Indian tongues it belonged.

All was bustle and tumult, especially at the hour set apart for the distribution of the rations.

Many were the scenes which here presented themselves, pourtraying the habits of both the red men and the demi-civilized beings around them. The interior of the village was one chaos of mud, rubbish, and confusion. Frame and clapboard houses were springing up daily under the active axes and hammers of the speculators, and piles of lumber announced the preparation for yet other edifices of an equally light character. Races occurred frequently on a piece of level sward without the village, on which temporary booths afforded the motley multitude the means of 'stimulating;' and betting and gambling were the order of the day. Within the vile two-storied barrack, which, dignified as usual by the title of Hotel, afforded us quarters, all was in a state of most appalling confusion, filth, and racket. The public table was such a scene of confusion, that we avoided it from necessity. The French landlord was a sporting character, and every thing was left to chance, who, in the shape of a fat housekeeper, fumed and toiled round the premises from morning to night.

Within, there was neither peace nor comfort, and we spent much of our time in the open air. A visit to the gentlemen at the fort, a morning's grouse-shooting, or a gallop on the broad surface of the prairie, filled up the intervals in our perturbed attempts at reading or writing in doors, while awaiting the progress of the treaty.

I loved to stroll out towards sun-set across the river, and gaze upon the level horizon, stretching to the north-west over the surface of the Prairie, dotted with innumerable objects far and near. Not far from the river lay many groups of tents constructed of coarse canvass, blankets, and mats, and surmounted by poles, supporting meat, mocassins, and rags. Their vicinity was always enlivened by various painted Indian figures, dressed in the most gaudy attire. The interior of the hovels generally displayed a confined area, perhaps covered with a few half-rotten mats or shavings, upon which men, women, children, and baggage were heaped pell-mell.

Far and wide the grassy Prairie teemed with figures; warriors mounted or on foot, squaws, and horses. Here a race between three or four Indian ponies, each carrying a double rider, whooping and yelling like fiends. There a solitary horseman with a long spear, turbaned like an Arab, scouring along at full speed;—groups of hobbled horses; Indian dogs and children, or a grave conclave of grey chiefs seated on the grass in consultation.

It was amusing to wind silently from group to group —here noting the raised knife, the sudden drunken brawl, quashed by the good-natured and even playful interference of the neighbours; there a party breaking up their encampment, and falling with their little train of loaded ponies, and wolfish dogs, into the deep black narrow trail running to the north. You peep into a wig-wam, and see a domestic feud; the chief sitting in dogged silence on the mat, while the women, of which there were commonly two or three in every dwelling, and who appeared every evening even more elevated with the fumes of whiskey than the males, read him a lecture. From another tent a constant voice of wrangling and weeping would proceed, when suddenly an offended fair one would draw the mat aside, and taking a youth standing without by the hand, lead him apart, and sitting down on the grass, set up the most indescribable whine as she told her grief. Then forward comes an Indian, staggering with his chum from a debauch; he is met by his squaw, with her child dangling in a fold of her blanket behind, and the sobbing and weeping which accompanies her whining appeal to him, as she hangs to his hand, would melt your heart, if you did not see that she was quite as tipsy as himself.

Here sitting apart and solitary, an Indian expends the exuberance of his intoxicated spirits in the most ludicrous singing and gesticulation; and there squat a circle of unruly topers indulging themselves in the most unphilosophic and excessive peals of laughter.

It is a grievous thing that Government is not strong-handed enough to put a stop to the shameful and scandalous sale of whiskey to these poor miserable wretches. But here lie casks of it for sale under the very eye of the Commissioners, met together for purposes, which demand that sobriety should be maintained, were it only that no one should be able to lay at their door an accusation of unfair dealing, and of having taken advantage of the helpless Indian in a bargain, whereby the people of the United States were to be so greatly the gainers. And such was the state of things day by day. However anxious I and others might be to exculpate the United States Government from the charge of cold and selfish policy toward the remnant of the Indian tribes, and from that of resorting to unworthy and diabolical means in attaining possession of their lands,—as long as it can be said with truth, that drunkenness was not guarded against, and that the means were furnished at the very time of the Treaty, and under the very nose of the Commissioners,—how can it be expected but a stigma will attend every transaction of this kind. The sin may lie at the door of the individuals more immediately in contact with them; but for the character of the people as a nation, it should be guarded against, beyond a possibility of transgression. Who will believe that any act, however formally executed by the chiefs, is valid, as long as it is known that whiskey was one of the parties to the Treaty.

'But how sped the Treaty ?' you will ask.

Day after day passed. It was in vain that the signal-gun from the fort gave notice of an assemblage of chiefs at the council fire. Reasons were always found for its delay. One day an influential chief was not in the way; another, the sky looked cloudy, and the Indian never performs any important business except the sky be clear. At length, on the 21st of September, the Pottawattomies resolved to meet the Commissioners. We were politely invited to be present.

The Council-fire was lighted under a spacious open shed on the green meadow, on the opposite side of the river from that on which the Fort stood. From the difficulty of getting all together, it was late in the afternoon when they assembled. There might be twenty or thirty chiefs present, seated at the lower end of the enclosure; while the Commissioners, Interpreters, &c. were at the upper. The palaver was opened by the principal Commissioner. He requested to know why he and his colleagues were called to the council? An old warrior arose, and in short sentences, generally of five syllables, delivered with a monotonous intonation, and rapid utterance, gave answer. His gesticulation was appropriate, but rather violent. Rice, the half-breed Interpreter, explained the signification from time to time to the audience; and it was seen that the old chief, who had got his lesson, answered one question by proposing another, the sum and substance of his oration being—'that the assembled chiefs wished to know what was the object of their Great Father at Washington in calling his Red Children together at Chicago!'

This was amusing enough after the full explanation given a week before at the opening session; and, particularly when it was recollected that they had feasted sumptuously during the interval at the expense of their Great Father, was not making very encouraging progress. A young chief rose and spoke vehemently to the same purpose. Hereupon the Commissioner made them a forcible Jacksonian discourse, wherein a good deal which was a-kin to threat, was mingled with exhortations not to play with their Great Father, but to come to an early determination, whether they would or would not sell and exchange their territory : and this done, the council was dissolved. One or two tipsy old chiefs raised an occasional disturbance, else matters were conducted with due gravity.

The relative positions of the Commissioner and the whites before the Council-fire, and that of the Red Children of the Forest and Prairie, were to me strikingly impressive. The glorious light of the setting sun streaming in under the low roof of the Council-House, fell full on the countenances of the former as they faced the West—while the pale light of the East, hardly lighted up the dark and painted lineaments of the poor Indians, whose souls evidently clave to their birth-right in that quarter. Even though convinced of the necessity of their removal, my heart bled for them in their desolation and decline. Ignorant and degraded as they may have been in their original state, their degradation is now ten-fold, after years of intercourse with the whites; and their speedy disappearance from the earth appears as certain as though it were already sealed and accomplished.

Your own reflection will lead you to form the conclusion, and it will be a just one,—that even if he had the will, the power would be wanting, for the Indian to keep his territory; and that the business of arranging the terms of an Indian Treaty, whatever it might have been two hundred years ago, while the Indian tribes had not, as now, thrown aside the rude but vigorous intellectual character which distinguished many among them, now lies chiefly between the various traders, agents, creditors, and half-breeds of the tribes, on whom custom and necessity have made the degraded chiefs dependant, and the Government Agents. When the former have seen matters so far arranged that their self-interest, and various schemes and claims are likely to be fulfilled and allowed to their hearts' content,—the silent acquiescence of the Indian follows of course; and till this is the case, the Treaty can never be amicably effected. In fine, before we quitted Chicago on the 25th, three or four days later, the Treaty with the Pottawattomies was concluded,—the Commissioners putting their hands, and the assembled chiefs their paws to the same.

By it, an apparently advantageous 'swop' was made for both parties;—the main conditions of which, if the information we received was correct, were,—that the Indians should remove from the territory they now occupied, within three years time—being conveyed at Government expense across the Mississippi, and over the State of Missouri, to the western boundary of the latter, where five millions of acres of rich and fine land were to be set apart for them;—and that they were to be supported for one year after their arrival in their new possession. Moreover, the Government bound itself to pay them over and above, a million of dollars; part of this sum being set aside for the payment of the debts of the tribe—part for a permanent school-fund—and part for agricultural purposes, presents, and so forth.

LETTER XII.

To give an account of our journey forward, over the fertile but thinly inhabited prairies of Illinois, to the river of that name, and subsequently to St. Louis on the Mississippi, is hardly worth the while, as one day was pretty much like the other, and all were without adventure. Our vehicle was a light four-wheeled carriage;—and we travelled generally over that excellent road afforded by the hard, even, unbroken sod.

The season had been marked by the ravages of the autumnal scourge of the rich and teeming West, the fever and ague; and every cottage was full of ghastly faces and emaciated forms.

I feel an impulse, though it comes rather late, to give you some further and more detailed account of that most remarkable feature of the Western world, the Prairies. There are districts both in South America and in Asia, the Pampas and the Steppes, to which they have been compared, but perhaps without sufficient reason. In Europe I am not aware of any part of the surface assuming the same form, and exhibiting the same phenomena. Of the class of scenery most likely to suggest comparison, they can neither be assimilated to our moors of the north, with their swells and heavy dark mantle of peat and ling,—nor to the grassy and thyme-scented downs of the south. They do not resemble the wide levels of France, the high lands of Spain, or the rich plains of Italy;—as, setting aside the immense extent of surface over which they are spread, their configuration and features are totally different, and probably their origin also.

Some hold that the whole of the vast region over which they extend was once submerged, and there is much to be said in support of this theory. They appear, however, under various forms, and from observation I should divide them into three great divisions: the 'oak-openings;'—the rich level or rolling Prairie interspersed with belts and points of timber;—and the vast sterile Prairies of the Far West.

And first the 'oak-openings;' so termed from their distinctive feature of the varieties of oak which are seen scattered over them, interspersed at times with pine, black walnut, and other forest trees, which spring from a rich vegetable soil, generally adapted to the purposes of agriculture. The land is ordinarily dry and rolling. The trees are of medium growth, and rise from a grassy turf seldom encumbered with brushwood, but not unfrequently broken by jungles of rich and gaudy flowering plants, and of dwarf sumac. Among the 'oak-openings' you find some of the most lovely landscapes of the West, and travel for miles and miles through varied park scenery of natural growth, with all the diversity of gently swelling hill and dale—here, trees grouped, or standing single—and there, arranged in long avenues as though by human hands, with slips of open meadow between. Sometimes the openings are interspersed with numerous clear lakes, and with this addition become enchantingly beautiful. But few of these reservoirs have any apparent inlet and outlet. They are fed by subterraneous springs or the rains, and lose their surplus waters by evaporation. Many lie in singularly formed hollows, reflecting in their clear bosoms the varied scenery of the swelling banks, and the alternation of wood and meadow. Michigan and Illinois abound with these 'oak-openings.' Beyond the Mississippi they also occur; but there they hardly form a distinct feature, while on this side they would appear to form a transition from the dense American forest to the wider 'rolling prairie,' which further west ordinarily bounds the thick forest without any such character of country intervening.

The rich 'rolling Prairie,' which would form the second division, presents other features, and in a great degree another vegetation. These Prairies abound with the thickest and most luxuriant belts of forest, or as they are called 'timbers;' appearing interspersed over the open face of the country in bands or patches of every possible form and size; sometimes chequering the landscape at short intervals, and at other times miles and miles apart. They present wide and slightly undulating tracts of great richness of soil, covered with a garden of the rankest herbage and flowers—many ridges and hollows filled with purple thistles—ponds covered with aquatic plants; and in Missouri, I always observed that these 'rolling prairies' occupied the higher portions of the country, the descent to the forested bottoms being invariably over steep and stony declivities. The depth and richness of the soil on these lands is almost incredible, and the edges of the bands of forest are consequently a favourite haunt of the emigrant settler and backwoodsman. The game is usually abundant. Over this class of Prairie the fire commonly passes in the autumn, and to this cause alone the open state of the country is ascribed by many; as, whenever a few years elapse without the conflagration touching a district, the thick sown seeds of the slumbering forest, with which the rich vegetable mould seems to be laden, spring up from the green sod of the country. The surface is first covered with brush-wood composed of sumac, hazel, wild cherry, and oak; and if the fire be still kept out, other forest trees follow.

From these we pass to the vast boundless Prairies of the Far West—such as we skirted beyond Fort Gibson, unbroken, save by the forest rising on the alluvion of some river shore below their level, or by the skirts of knotted and harsh oak-wood of stunted growth—thick without luxuriance, such as the Cross

Timbers of disagreeable memory. These Prairies seem to occupy the highest parts of the table land towards the sources of the great rivers and their tributaries. Here the soil is poor in the extreme, and charged with iron and salt; the water is scarce and bad, and the grass far from luxuriant. They abound with abrupt and peculiarly shaped flinty hills, swelling up from the general level—great salt plains—rock salt—and occasionally with isolated rocks rising from the surface, with steep perpendicular sides, as though cut by the hand of man, standing alone in the midst of the desert, a wonder to the Indian and the trapper.

The outline of these Prairies is grand and majestic in the extreme. They are rarely perfectly level. As you advance, one immense sea of grass swells to the horizon after another, unbroken for leagues by rock or tree. They are the home of the Bison, and the hunting ground of the unfettered Indian of the north and west.

I admire the Prairies of every class, with all their seeming monotony; and am often tempted to muse over them and their peculiar features, and the cheerful days we spent upon their vast surface.

Our route through the State of Illinois led us to Ottawa, a small village at the junction of the two principal streams which form the Illinois river—thence to Peoria, and southward by way of the town of Springfield and a country rapidly filling with settlers, to Edwardsville and St. Louis.

Many respectable emigrant families from England have lately taken up their abode, and established themselves as farmers in this part of the West. Upon such I cannot but look with sorrowful interest.

Of all emigrants, the Englishman experiences the most difficulty in settling down in a new country, and making up his mind to yield to circumstances. Whatever may have been his previous position, or his previous language, he comes in general with his mind hampered by prejudice in favour of the customs and habits of his own country; and deeming customary gratifications as absolute necessaries of life. He has not the buoyant elasticity and gaiety of the Frenchman. He has not been subjected to kicks and cuffs like the German; he has not the careless hilarity of the Irishman, and wants the patient endurance and pliancy of the Scotchman.

These latter classes of settlers, even if they should have formed false views of the country, are still able to bend to circumstances, and make the most of what is frequently a bad bargain.

Here comes a ship load of Irish. They land upon the wharfs of New York in rags and open-knee'd breeches, with their raw looks and bare necks; they flourish their cudgels, throw up their torn hats and cry,—' hurrah for Gineral Jackson!' They get drunk and kick up a row;—lend their forces to any passing disturbance, and make early acquaintance with the interior of the lock-ups. From New York they go in swarms to the canals, rail-roads, and public works, where they perform the labour which the Americans are not inclined to do: now and then they get up a fight among themselves in the style of the ould Ireland, and perhaps kill one another, expressing great indignation and surprise when they find that they must answer for it, though they are in a free country. By degrees, the more thrifty get and keep money, and diving deeper into the continent, purchase lands; while the intemperate and irreclaimable vanish from the surface. The Americans complain, and justly, of the disorderly population which Ireland throws into the bosom of the Union, but there are many reasons why they should be borne with. They, with the poor Germans, do the work which without them could hardly be done. Though the fathers may be irreclaimable, the children become good citizens,—and there is no finer race in the world both for powers of mind and body than the Irish, when favoured by education and under proper control. In one thing the emigrant Irish of every class distinguish themselves above the people of other nations, and that is in the love and kindly feeling which they cherish towards their native land, and towards those whom they have left behind; a fact proved by the large sums which are yearly transmitted from them to the mother country, in aid of their poverty-stricken relatives.

The Scotchman is the Scotchman all the world over, and always excepting perhaps in the Eastern States, where his 'cuteness' and prudence is met by yet greater, he is sure to make his way with credit.

He bends to the storm and gradually overcomes the difficulties of his position, however great. The Germans and the French both prosper in America. The few of our Gallic neighbours who of late years have been numbered among the emigrants to the United States have been equally national in their heated expectations, and the facility with which they have yielded to any modification or annihilation of them, which experience has shown necessary. We met somewhere on the Mississippi with a *petit bon homme* and his wife, who had been lured out of some snug gossipping village in Tourraine, if I mistake not, to come over to Kentucky with a project of setting up a *café* and *restaurant*, in a place, where, as they might see by the map, four roads met, and where they were told, that the diligences always halted. It is so easy to enter into their little whirl of hopes and expectations, and to conceive their utter dismay at finding, after a voyage and journey of many thousand miles, the promised Utopia of the last six months turned into a cross road cut through a dense forest many miles from the nearest squatter. And there they were, on the banks of the Mississippi, standing guard over their little pile of trunks full of napkins, liqueur glasses, coffee cups, curaçoa, *annisette*, and '*parfait amour*,' with looks of infinite sang froid and gaiety; and long e'er this they have doubtless found a nest, and a comfortable one, in some corner of the wide world of the West.

But in honest John Bull there is no such pliancy. He may talk of philosophy, but, commonly speaking, he knows nothing about it but the name; and many a buffet and many a vexation which others avoid by stooping, he is sure to get; and this observation applies almost as much to the poorest English emigrant as to the man of a higher class;—from the good Yorkshire-woman whom I found in Pennsylvania, whither her love for her master and mistress had led her to repair, who complained that she 'could not abide America—where the frogs gulped like Dawson's bull, and where there were spiders as big as a platter'—to Mr. V. who with higher expectations and greater refinement, thought to cultivate a thousand acres in the West, as he had cultivated his Bedfordshire farm.

While I rejoice to see facilities afforded to the emigration of the teeming thousands of the lower classes from these islands, because I think that in this case the change offers to their children a reasonable prospect of a change for the better; in general, I am far from being a friend to the emigration of families, or of men past the term of youth, from the middle ranks of society; and though no one will deny, but that step may in certain cases be both advisable, and perhaps imperative, yet I am convinced that few gain in the aggregate what they seek—greater ease of body and mind, and a rise in the scale. Depend upon it, there are hundreds and thousands toiling under the sky of the West, who, if they had shewed equal diligence and equal perseverance in England, would never have had to forsake their native land. This I believe may be stated as a truth with regard to the agriculturists, and with far greater application to those who wish to pursue the professions. It is not to be denied that a man may get bread with more facility, but bread alone will not yield happiness. It is true, you see men of talent and superior minds in Britain toiling day after day, week after week, and year after year, apparently merely to procure for themselves the bare food, shelter, and clothing, which in the New World are attained by thousands with seemingly but little exertion. But are these all that their abode in England ensures to them? As long as a man can support himself and his family, in his own country, even though it be with toil of body and mind, he should be counselled to remain there, resting assured that he has comforts, enjoyments, and advantages in the opposite scale, which will more than repay him for his anxiety and labour.

As to that class of emigrants whose minds are sufficiently oblique to lead them to think that in quitting Britain they are leaving a land of tyranny and oppression, the sooner they go the better—as has been well said, their country's greatest fault is, that she has bred and nurtured such ungrateful fools!

But no one will deny, that at the present day, in the actual state of the professions, the depreciation of the agricultural interest, &c. a man of education, reflection, and sober mind may find himself and his family so circumstanced, that emigration appears the door opened to him by the finger of God. Such an one will feel beforehand that the mere acquisition of bread will never make up to him that which he loses and forsakes. Next to forming a just estimate of what he purposes to leave behind, it is important that he should entertain a sound judgment of what he has in prospect. Both one and the other are duties of no ordinary difficulty, seeing we never know the value of what we possess, till we are no longer in possession; and there is that in the very impulse of expectation, which inclines us to throw a false but favourable colouring over our estimate of the future. How few land in America with minds prepared for the change! How few terminate the first day after landing without a long and bitter hour of unavailing regret! Their passage to the very strand of their native land had been smoothed by the comforts of their home;—their feelings had been soothed to the moment of separation; and the last objects they saw were the waving handkerchiefs and affectionate eyes of those whom they had loved and lived with. Here, on the threshold of their new adoption, for the first time they feel that they are alone. No one comes to welcome or to aid. Though their own language still sounds in their ears, its accents are cold; every eye among the thousands that meet their sight, is that of a stranger—no one welcomes, no one aids. Then the false expectations with which they have been buoyed up give way, and they seem to have made an exchange for the worse.

How it may be in Canada, I do not know, but it is a singular truth, that in the majority of cases where the English emigrant brings capital, he either loses it, or rarely succeeds in reaping the advantage which might be supposed consequent upon the possession. Nor is this confined to the English, but to many of the inhabitants of the more settled States themselves, when emigrating to new lands, in the South and West. The men who prosper in the back settlements are those who labour with their own hands, and in the rude manner which experience has shown to be the most suited to the climate and character of the country;—those who have neither the prejudices of refined education, or of a style of farming under perfectly different circumstances, to contend with, nor the means to attempt their introduction. A thousand vexations and disappointments await him who carries into the backwoods the science of a Norfolk agriculturist, and the means at command of there essaying its application. No; if your friend goes to America with the idea of fixing his family in either Canada or the Western States, let him do as others have done before him, and as all must do who would succeed. Let him not burden himself with farming implements—all that are necessary can be procured in the Atlantic States. Let him leave his family in the latter, or in Lower Canada, and having formed an opinion of the State and the part of the country where he would wish his future purchase to be made; keeping out of the hands of land-jobbers and speculators, he should go forward for a couple of months alone. Instead of repairing to the land-office established on unoccupied lands for the sale, and, looking over the surveys, marking for himself a tract that may appear favourably situated on the shores of this or that river, let him turn backwoodsman for a while, doff his superfine clothes, and don the buckskin,—carry with him his rifle, a light axe and a knife, and with a single companion scout the country for a fortnight, examining the unoccupied lands or even the occupied ones, many of which may be bought from the backwoodsman. He will in that time be able to form a judgment for himself, and make up his mind as to the eligibility of a situation;—he may have followed the water-courses;—have remarked what facilities are afforded for the erection of mills or for the exportation of produce to the markets far or near;—have selected a proper situation for his future dwelling, and by a little unwonted exposure, hard fare, and the insight thus given into the habits of the country, have nerved himself to the trial which awaits him and his.

Let him beware how he disturbs the squatter, however unauthorized by law, in his possession of the land he occupies. If he can come to a fair bargain with him for the improvement he has wrought in the wilderness, well and good. In many parts of the West, and in Illinois, I believe, among the rest, a law, called the Preemption Law, has been passed for the protection of such as have been occupants of the soil even without title, prior to a certain date. A squatter who had possession of a tract before that time, is permitted to put in his claim to purchase the same, and thus make it his own for ever, at the very lowest

Government price, in preference to the higher bidders. But many squatters, whose date of occupation is posterior to the passing of the Act, are not protected by its provisions: you may overbid them and get possession. But it is unadvisable to do so; for many of the sellers have banded together to sustain what they call Club-law; by which any man who has seated himself upon unoccupied land, and brought it into cultivation, is allowed by common consent, to buy it when it comes into the market, at the lowest price—no one taking advantage of him, however the State law might bear the bidder out in so doing. If any one does, he is considered a rogue, and probably his 'bid' is instantly followed by a beating; while if he persist, and through the law obtain possession, persecution without end drives him from it, and forces his relinquishment of the tract in question. Many strangers not understanding this, have found themselves most unpleasantly situated.

In the choice of a tract for purchase, the emigrant should look upon the salubrity of the situation rather than the richness of the soil.

Having finally fixed upon the future inheritance of his children, we will suppose him to bring them out in the spring, which is the best season, as far as health and comfort are concerned; and will allow him plenty of time to provide the necessary accommodations for food and shelter before the winter; and we will suppose that before the trees lose their leaves, a comfortable family house of logs or clapboard, with the necessary out-buildings, fencing, furniture, and a few acres of maize and potatoes, of which the produce may be already housed, show that the first year has not been unemployed. The second, more land is brought into cultivation, an orchard and garden are planted, and his stock of cattle and hogs increase. Animal wants are easily supplied, and a yearly increasing surplus is carried to the distant market.

A third follows: the recollection of past exposure to unwonted hardship from the want of comfortable habitations, change of food and habits, may not be forgotten, and the new position found to be reconcilable with a degree of happiness. The tenth year may see the log-habitation supplanted by a substantial brick or stone mansion; and a capital, husbanded with care, and till now laid aside for a day when its useful appropriation and expenditure is no longer to be considered as speculation, adds to his comforts, and enables the emigrant to do what he is called to do for his family, and with satisfaction to himself. Yet I look upon every countryman whom I find talking of home in these countries with commiseration and interest.

Who shall paint the feelings of many an English father and mother during these long ten years, while struggling with difficulties? Will they think of their forsaken country without home-sickness? Will they see all that charm with which their imagination painted new scenes and new climes, disappear, without heart-ache? A thousand things will grate upon their feelings; the cold competition with strangers,—harshness of character in their neighbours,—the absence of natural friends,—the long periods that must elapse before a question and answer pass between distant relatives! Who dare predict years without disaster, sickness, death?—how embittered by the absence of those who alone would and could sympathize! And as their children grow up, how will they grieve over their restricted means of education and of religious instruction. How they will miss the harmony of sweet sounds that fills the air on a Sabbath morn in their own land, and the exchange of their own calm, sober rule of faith and practice, for the occasional excitement of a religious assemblage, without order or community of feeling.

Every one, whose periods of education, youth, and early manhood, were spent within the bounds of Britain, must, if he has a heart, experience that his feelings and prejudices are on the side of the land of his fathers. Some may see the shores of their native land fade from behind them with indifference; some in anger, and many in shame—but with none of these will a good man have community of feeling. Multitudes part from her with unfeigned grief and sorrow, averring that if they were alone in the world, they would never have turned their back on their birthright, however for their children's sake they may have done so; and such will reflect upon the country of their birth, and the scenes of earlier days, with an affection which neither time nor circumstances will impair. God alone knows whether for their children's sake also, they had not done better and more wisely to remain where His Providence had planted them.

LETTER XIII.

My last letter was supposed to bring us safely, for the second time, to St. Louis; and before I continue my relation of our autumnal rambles, I will fulfil a promise, by giving you some sketch of this city, and of the points of interest in its neighbourhood.

You are aware of the early settlement of this part of the West by the French. While the first English colonists in Virginia and New England remained, for many years subsequent to their entry into the country, pent up within their narrow boundaries along the Atlantic, and engaged in constant quarrels with the natives,—their French rivals to the northward, of more mercurial and more pliant habits, were seen adventuring their persons in small parties, or even as single individuals, over the whole valley of the St. Lawrence, and the shores of its vast Lakes; visiting one remote tribe of Indians after another, and, by manners admirably suited to the end in view—conciliating all. They penetrated to the Great River of the West, ascended it to the Falls of St. Anthony; and traced the courses of the Ohio, the Arkansas, and other tributaries.

Wherever the Indian was found, or could lead, there, pressed by avarice, ambition, or religious zeal, the Frenchman would follow. He accommodated himself to the circumstances of his savage companions, easily learned the science of the Forest and of the River, and was cheerful and contented under all privations.

The great richness and prodigal luxuriance of the country, both above and below the junction of the Mississippi and the Missouri, seems to have struck the French with wonder, and many colonies of an earlier foundation than some of the oldest cities of the East were straightway planned and settled by emigrants from Canada. The vicinity of the American Bottom opposite St. Louis, in particular, saw many of these little settlements rise on its inexhaustible soil. The villages of Notre Dame de Kaskaskia, Cahokia, Prairie de Rocher, St. Philippe, Fort Chartres, and others sprung up in the wilderness. Many of the original names given to situations and hamlets, still speak the straits and privations to which the early adventurers and settlers were exposed, such were *Creve Cœur*, so named by the gallant La Salle; *Vide Poche*, now Carondelet, and *Pain Court*, now St. Louis.

The communication between these remote settlements and the parent colony in Canada was necessarily difficult and irregular, and that with New Orleans, accompanied with much labour and peril. The only mode of procuring merchandize for the Indian traffic in furs, or the supplies for the town, was necessarily, up to a very recent period, confined to keel-boats, which started early in the spring on their voyage of more than thirteen hundred miles, and returned in the fall of the year. The return against the powerful current was the labour of months, frequently entailing a continuance of violent manual exertion for many days when the wind did not favour the ascent. The boats were then either poled up the shallows; or dragged forward, yard by yard, by means of ropes fixed to the shores, and shifted according as the boat attained the point aimed at.

To the dangers resulting from snags and drift wood, grounding, and attacks from the hostile Indians, yet another was added from the river-robbers—the scum of the white population, who, banding together under a common chief, waylaid the returning boats, and attempted their capture by both decoy and violence. Such a band existed not fifty years ago near Cotton Wood Creek, under two chiefs, Culbert and Magilbray, whose murders and robberies struck terror into the inhabitants of the colonies. The owners of the various barges were at length obliged to furnish themselves with swivels and other arms, and make the annual voyage in company, and the passage was finally opened by the defeat and dispersion of that band.

Since this part of the continent became subject to the flag of the United States, the city of St. Louis, overrun by the speculative New Englanders, has begun to spread over a large extent of ground on the bank of the river, and promises to become one of the most flourishing cities of the West. A new town has in fact sprung up by the side of the old one, with long well-built streets and handsome rows of warehouses, constructed of excellent grey limestone, quarried on the spot. The inhabitants, of French extraction, are however still numerous, both in their part of the town and in the neighbouring villages; and it is amusing to a European to step aside from the hurry and bustle of the upper streets, full of pale scheming faces, depressed brows, and busy fingers, to the quiet quarters of the lower division, where many a characteristic sight and sound may be observed. Who can peep into the odd little coffee-houses with their homely billiard-tables—see those cosy balconies and settees,—mark the prominent nose, rosy cheek, and the contented air and civil demeanour of the males, and the intelligent eye and gossipping tongue of the females—listen to the sound of the fiddle, or perchance the jingle of a harpsichord, or spinnet, from the window of the wealthier *Habitant*, crisp and sharp like a box of crickets,—without thinking of scenes in the provinces of the mother country. Apropos, I must not forget to mention that though we did not see our quondam retainer Tonish, whom I trust you have not forgotten, we heard enough of him from a gentleman who had been on the spring expedition with our good friend the Commissioner. He had survived the winter in doors,—had recovered his spirits, volubility, and effrontery as spring advanced, and had sent for his son to be his aide-de-camp during the ensuing expedition; and our informant assured us that he and 'young hopeful,' contrived to slip the lies, which were of daily production, from one to another, with such dexterity that it was seldom that either father or son could be fairly caught and exposed.

I have more than once named that proverbially fertile plain, stretching along the eastern banks of the Mississippi for nearly eighty miles, above and below St. Louis, and called the 'American Bottom.' Its average breadth is about five miles, and it is bounded to the eastward by a continuous line of steep bluffs, which, probably, at some distant period of time formed the eastern bank of the river. A rich alluvial soil of twenty or thirty feet in perpendicular depth is covered with a succession of open grass-lands or prairie, and with bands of forest which for stately growth and the variety of its timber, is hardly to be matched in any part of the West. Here all the fruit-trees of the valley are seen in their greatest perfection; and wherever the soil has been brought into cultivation, the crops have exhibited a rank luxuriance without example. On some portions near the old French settlements, a yearly crop of maize has been raised for a hundred years and upwards, without any signs of impoverishment in the soil.

This extensive level, with that upon the opposite side of the Mississippi, a few miles higher up, through which the Missouri flows previous to its junction with the former, and which is bounded by a similar line of bluffs, showing in common with those on the American Bottom the action of water,—have been considered as having at a remote period formed the bed of an extensive lake, through which the two great rivers flowed on their course towards the Gulf: and there are appearances in the present bed of the Mississippi, a little below the mouth of the Kaskaskia river, of the former existence of a chain of rocks completely across the stream, forming a barrier over which it may be supposed that the waters of the Mississippi antiently precipitated themselves in a range of stupendous falls. A huge circular mass of rock, called the Grand Tower, apparently channelled from top to bottom by the friction of the waters for ages, still at this day interposes an impediment to the free passage of the broad stream. If these falls ever existed, the truth of the surmise of the plains above alluded to having once been a lake, would be apparent. That many ages, however, must have elapsed since it was drained, in consequence of the disappearance of this supposed barrier, is proved by the vast depth of vegetable mould on the American Bottom, as well as by the antiquity of the monuments rising from its bosom.

Unfortunately, the continuous level is against the proper drainage of the tract just named, and this, combining with the immense body of vegetable matter in decay in the fall of the year, renders the whole of this district extremely unhealthy. Man is evidently intended to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow, and where nature seems to provide it for him without labour, there sickness and distress of body and mind are in store for him.

Yet it is not merely the astonishing fertility, the gigantic sycamores and grape-vines, the spicewood, the pawpaws and peccan-nuts, the groves of wild plum and crab of this district, or the game with which the surface abounds, that allure the passing stranger to cross the Mississippi to wander over its surface;—the Indian Mounds, those inexplicable monuments of the former existence of a people whose name and age are blanks in the world's history, are found scattered over its surface in greater number and size, than, perhaps, on any other part of the West of the same area.

I have remarked elsewhere what constant subjects of interest they were to my companions and myself in former tours; and I took frequent advantage of a twofold detention at St. Louis in the course of the autumn, and particularly of that at the close of November, to cross the river repeatedly, and wander among them. Were I to indulge in the sentimental, I might say, that the very season was propitious to the search after them, and gave rise to feelings which harmonized with the reflections they suggested. The whole face of the country was marked with the finger of decay, and spoke of past strength and beauty. The tall wiry grass on the open prairie was dead. The air was perfumed by the smell of decayed vegetation. All the leaves had fallen from the trees, and the brown pods of the red-bud were seen ranged in long rows under the boughs. The blood-red leaves of the sumac were all on the ground. A few straggling plants of the solidago and aster tribes, drowned in moisture, here and there still reared their heads, but all the beauty of both field and forest had passed. The sounds which broke on the ear, as you dragged your way through the deep roads in the forest, were limited in number, and rude in tone. A few blue jays still lingered, screaming at intervals around the naked boughs, and the tap of the grey-woodpecker jarred through the forest. The only beings which seemed to consider the season created for them, and who enjoyed it accordingly, were the porkers, numbers of whom might be observed on every side, with a ridge of horrent bristles on the spine, grunting with satisfaction, and routing among the dead leaves for the inexhaustible mast and nuts. The wind, too, whistled mournfully amid the trees, and rustled among the dry leaves and stalks of Indian corn on the patches of cultivated ground or on the borders of the creeks. A thin red haze filled the air, through which the bluffs loomed at a distance of a deep purple, and the Mounds appeared dilated to a far greater size than they lay claim to in reality.

If you have read any works on America, you will have been made attentive to these extensive remains—the sole antiquities of this part of the world;—as, ever since their existence has become generally known, with the fact, that the Indian tribes of our day, apparently declining in number at the very time of the discovery of the continent, were themselves seated on a soil whose ancient monuments attested its prior possession by a more numerous and more civilized race, they became a favourite theme for the speculation of the theorist and the traveller. A thousand conjectures have been set afloat as to the race and degree of civilization of their authors, the epoch of their existence, the reasons for their utter extinction and the lost record of their history.

That they were a very numerous people, having attained to an imperfect degree of civilization, superior nevertheless to that of the tribes scattered over the continent in the present age, may be conceded and agreed to on all hands. This is attested by the innumerable traces of ancient towns and villages—the large extent of lands evidently once under cultivation—and other extraordinary monuments of their social state scattered over the valley of the Mississippi, such as mounds or tumuli, cemeteries, fortifications, and reservoirs. The number, and the great dimensions of many of these works might well cause surprise, yet at the same time the degree of civilization necessary for their construction has probably always been falsely estimated.

These monuments are scattered over a vast extent of country. To the northward you find them on the Mississippi, as high as Prairie de Chien. There are none, if we were rightly informed, about the Falls of St. Anthony, and it is doubtful if they exist north or east of the Great Lakes; but they are found on their southern shores. There are but dubious and scattered traces of them either in New England, or in the States east of the Alleghany, with the exception of the western parts of the State of New York, till you get as far southward as Georgia and Florida, where they abound. The main seat of this lost people appears to have been in the central parts of the valley of the Mississippi, where the number and magnitude of their antiquities are the greatest; and westward, traces of them have been noticed to the very foot of the Rocky Mountains, and even Lewis and Clarke mention monuments of a similar description beyond that chain.

How far the whole can be justly attributed to the production of the same people and the same age it is very difficult to say. The symmetrical mounds of the Southern States, their roads, cause-ways, avenues, and plantations of oak, and the artificial ponds connected with them, would appear to be the work of a people distinct from those whose remains are found in Ohio and the neighbouring countries; — but I am neither going to advance theories of my own nor write an essay upon those of others, and therefore offer no speculation on this head. I would, with regard to the general degree of civilization of these races, merely observe, that despite the great extent of many of their fortifications and the regular plans observed in their formation,—their being constructed merely of the superficial earth heaped up to certain heights without ditches, in accordance to a certain ground plan, in the form of walls, ramparts, watch-mounds, &c.—the rare occurrence of stone-work even of the rudest kind in their edifices,—the comparative insignificance and rudeness of the implements and ornaments discovered in the tumuli—all militate against the idea of a people advanced much beyond the present races in civilization; and it is even to be questioned whether the Natchez and other superior tribes fast disappearing from the South, at the time when the early Spanish and French settlements were made, were not as far advanced as a social body, as those who erected the monuments in question.

The most remarkable among the regular fortifications which we personally inspected, was that near Newark, in the centre of Ohio. This partly consists of two circular ramparts, the inner being at present about thirty feet above the level of the country, enclosing a wide area, and about a mile in circuit. The apertures or gateways in both are perfectly distinct. The whole work is covered by the tall and stately forest, the growth of centuries; a line of works connect the circular fort thus formed, with a square of similar construction about two miles off. Many other tokens of a forgotten age have been discovered in the neighbourhood, and among the rest many hundred wells, of various depths.

Like almost all the coeval monuments in this country, the walls were constructed merely of superficial earth, the tribes which raised them having rarely shown the wit to procure their materials and double the height of their defences, by the construction of a ditch.

The fortifications at Newark, with those on Point

Creek, those on the Muskingum near Marietta, and again a cluster at Circleville, of all of which full descriptions have been repeatedly published, are among the most regular and singular hitherto discovered.[1] As was observed above, stone was rarely employed in the construction of walls, and was then rudely heaped together without cement or mortar. Yet in Missouri, and in one or two of the adjoining states, stone erections have been found in which a certain degree of regularity has been detected; and when you consider what a small part of this immense country has been fully explored, it is not improbable that many more may be discovered. I was informed by a gentleman in Tennessee of the existence of a singular and antique stone fort on the summit of a mountain in Franklin county, Alabama, near Little Bear Creek, a tributary of Tennessee river, but have never read any notice of it. He stated that it was much damaged by the earthquakes of 1811-12.

The traces of large towns are frequently to be met with, some of which would really seem, if the published reports may be credited, to have been of vast extent, great regularity of plan, and originally composed of permanent habitations. When at Little Rock, we were strongly urged to visit an unexplored city, said to lie on the banks of Red River to the north-west of Alexandria, which is known in that remote country by the name of the Old Town. This we were seriously assured might be traced by embankments and ruins over an area twenty-three miles long by four broad! Our informant stated that he should judge the cemetery to be a mile square! So much appears to be certain, from a general view of the discoveries up to the present time, that a vast population was once harboured throughout the fertile West; that to a certain degree the inhabitants cultivated the ground and lived together in large numbers, surrounding their towns and villages and frequently their cultivated grounds also with defences consisting of embankments and palisades, as the tribes in Florida did at the time of the invasion of Ferdinand de Soto.

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[1] Beck's Gazetteer of Illinois and Missouri.

I have just alluded to the larger and more extensive works in point of plan, to introduce the subject of the Indian Mounds, which, from their peculiarity of position, and their frequency, and the immense labour and time which must have been consumed in the erection of some of their number, have been the subject of so many discussions. The regularity of plan, and the manifest end to be obtained by the former class of works, set the question at rest as to their being the work of human hands. But not so with the Mounds sprinkled over the country, many of which, to the present hour, are contested to be the production of nature. I have somewhere admitted that my own belief in their artificial construction had been staggered by the observation made during our western tours, upon the singular chain of elevations that might be observed, beginning with those which were evidently artificial, and ascending to those about whose natural formation, however unaccountable, there existed no shadow of doubt. Dimension is nothing, for you find natural hillocks, which for size you might well judge at first sight to have been raised by the hand of man, and again, mounds incontestibly artificial which emulate hills in height, and in the gigantic solidity of the mass.

Time and observation, however, gives a facility to draw the distinction between the two classes. The artificial Mounds are found of all sizes and figures, circular, square, oblong, and elliptical—from a few yards to ninety feet in perpendicular height. Some flat, others conical at the summit. Sometimes they appear in groups, either arranged after an evidently general plan, or without symmetry either of size or position; at others perfectly isolated.* They are far more widely dispersed over the country than the other rude monuments, with whose age they seem to be coeval in erection, from their being frequently combined in the plan of the regular fortifications. We met with them on the shores of Lake Michigan, and on the islands on the coast of Florida, almost invariably on rich plains, or in the bosom of noble forests: here in large numbers of precisely similar form on the Prairies, forming apparently the graves of millions—and there, rising singly like a rude pyramid on the edge of some shadowy creek. It is probable that some were built as tombs, others as watch-towers or for defence, and perhaps the larger class as rude temples. Most of those tumuli which have been opened have been found to contain human bones, coarse pottery, rude weapons, or ornaments. But none of the larger have hitherto undergone scrutiny.

There is an artificial Mound situated forty miles west of Chicago, which measures four hundred and fifty yards in length, by seventy-five in breadth—and sixty feet in perpendicular height. Its form is elliptical, with a flat top. This, with one on Grave Creek, near Wheeling, in Western Virginia, and that which I shall presently describe, are accounted the three largest hitherto discovered in the United States.

But to return to the neighbourhood of St. Louis. To the north of the town, lies a remarkable group of Mounds; the most remote and the largest of which, of an elliptical form, commands a wide extent of country towards the junction of the Mississippi and Missouri, and seems to have been evidently intended for a look-out.

To any one coming up the river from New Orleans, its size would be a subject of wonder, and yet it dwindles into insignificance in comparison with the Big Mound on the Cahokia, to which I have intended to lead you.

You have hardly crossed the river to the American Bottom, and emerged from the shelter of the belt of forest bordering the shore, before the vicinity and number of the Mounds, rising like gigantic hay-cocks from the level of the prairie, strikes the eye. Seventy may be counted on either side of the Edwardsville road, within seven miles of the city, apparently scattered over the country without much attention to order or regularity. They are all covered to the summit with coarse prairie-grass or bushes.

After riding for about four miles over the sod of the Prairie, we reached the principal group, consisting of sixteen or eighteen, occupying an extensive area to the south and west of the Cahokia creek, on the edge of which rises the principal Mound. Standing before it, it required all the credulity I was able to muster, to persuade myself that the immense mass before me—with its slopes waving with grass and brushwood, and gullied by the rains—allowing sufficient area for a small farm with the necessary tenements—and with sides clothed by the tall forest—could be the work of human hands.

How many years, how many hands would suffice for the erection of such a mass!—when also, it is evident, that the whole of the materials, and those composing the others in the neighbourhood, were collected from the surface or brought from a distance. I looked to the neighbouring bluffs, upon whose outline lay mounds, which for regularity of form and size, would seem to argue that they were the work of the same hands, but which I knew from their structure, were nature's handiwork, and would have gladly persuaded myself that this was of their class. But it is of no use to doubt the fact. The Big Mound on the Cahokia, large as it is, is the work of man, and of that we became convinced beyond all doubt, by an hour's careful and jealous inspection. Its position with others on a wide level plain of alluvial formation, its uniformity of soil throughout, wherever exposed—its regularity of figure, which is that of a parallelogram, lying north and south, with a broad apron to the southward, and a second, yet lower, further in advance—and its evident connection with the other mounds in the vicinity, all confirm the fact, though no tradition informs us who was its architect, or for what purpose it was erected.

The circumference of the base is stated to be six hundred yards, and its perpendicular height, after the rains of centuries have wasted it, about ninety feet.

Some of the nearer Mounds are of very considerable dimensions, and on one of them a number of refugee Monks of the order of La Trappe, found a retreat for some years during the troubles in their native land. They cultivated the apron or step of the Big Mound, as their kitchen-garden, and set themselves down in the solitude of the Prairie, to the silent observance of their severe monastic rule, among these everlasting monuments of a departed race. They have, however, long ago quitted their temporary retreat. From them, the principal eminence has since often been termed, the Monks' Mound.

LETTER XIV.

THE season was now so far advanced upon our arrival at St. Louis, that less determined wanderers than ourselves would have rather bent their projects and their steps southward, than further to the north.

Yet, upon finding so many impediments in the way of our gaining the Upper Lakes on our arrival at Detroit, as related in a former letter, we had conceived the wish to ascend to the Falls of St. Anthony, on the Upper Mississippi, computed to lie about eight hundred miles above St. Louis.

Here, having determined to venture the attempt, we halted a few days, partly to make the necessary arrangements and purchases for our expedition, and partly to await the arrival of a comrade to whom we had given rendezvous.

Mr. M'Euen eventually joined us on the 6th of October, and the next day we set off to the northward. The waters of the Mississippi were very low, and as difficulty was anticipated in an ascent over the De Moyen Rapids to Galena, we resolved to proceed thus far by land, and therefore retraced our steps for three days through Illinois, to Peoria on the Illinois River.

Peoria is situated at the foot of an expansion of the river, forming a lake twenty miles long, by one and a half in breadth. It ranks among the earliest French settlements in the country; but while in every direction large towns of recent foundation spring up, Peoria remains a wretched and ruinous collection of habitations. A spell seems to rest on these early settlements of the French.

From Peoria to Galena the road leads over vast prairies, as yet very rarely broken by cultivation. This line of country was in a great measure the scene of the preceding year's Indian War with the Sauks and Foxes, and most of the white settlers had been compelled to abandon their habitations for a while, or to defend themselves within palisadoed enclosures, while they kept their active and crafty foe at bay with the rifle. Of course the accommodation afforded throughout was of the most homely description. The farm houses generally lay on the edge of some rich piece of forested land, on the margin of one of the numerous creeks or rivers, and were usually built in the southern style, as elsewhere described, namely, two square log-apartments divided by a covered passage, while the kitchen premises lay without. The upper loft was almost always unfinished; and the floors covered with rough planks hewn by the axe. The furniture was necessarily scanty, comprising besides the beds in the corners, a table, a few stools or a bench, a chest or two containing the family clothing, and a shelf with a few papers and books. A few bottles of powerful medicine hung on one nail, and on another the trusty skin-pouch and powder horn, and a charger made of an alligator's tooth. One or two rifles were always to be seen in a dry corner. In these crowded apartments we were frequently obliged to stow ourselves away at night pell-mell with the family, much to the surprise of M'Euen, whose long period of European travel had prevented his visiting the back settlements of his native country at an earlier period, and many a laughable night scene we witnessed. You may imagine a crowded area of twelve or fourteen feet square, furnishing the bed-chamber of as many people. In the corners the travellers were allowed to stow themselves away enveloped in their clothes and blanket-coats on the low plank erections which might pass for bedsteads. The floor at one end would be occupied by the driver, the squatter, and another, side by side under the same rug spread before the fire, and at the other extremity a huge flock sack, laid upon the planks, served as the family bed. The mother and eldest daughter would lie down on it at opposite ends, so that each other's feet and head would be in contact, were it not for the little children, whom, to the number of three or four, we have seen stowed in, as M'Euen, said, 'like mortar between the stones,' to keep all tight. Poor people! many of them had not recovered the consequences of their flight, and the ravage of their dwellings by the Indians, and had further suffered greatly from the unhealthiness of the past season. That extreme liability to fever and ague, which is the lot of all the settlers in these abundant regions, under circumstances when medical advice is frequently unattainable, is perhaps the greatest trial which the settler of the West has to endure. No part of the rich fertile lands, whether forested, or open prairie, is exempt from the disease, and the settlers on the summits of the high bluffs, which in some parts of the course of the Mississippi rise from its shores, are even more exposed to its ravages than those on a level with the stream. The helplessness of the settlers under these circumstances lays them open to the trickery and cajoling of innumerable quacks, who, under the name of fever and steam-doctors, travel through the country with their vile medicines, and ruin the health of many a poor invalid for life. One of these quacks was reported while we were in the Mining country, to have steamed a patient to death in the short period of fourteen minutes, and had consequently found some difficulty in escaping from the rage of the neighbours. The Regulators might be of use here.

I am convinced, however, that a little more care in the choice of a plot of ground for an habitation, attention to drainage, raising the floor a few feet from the earth, less exposure to the morning and evening dews, and warmer clothing, would be productive of far better health in the settlers.

On the fourth day of our journey north, when we were between Rock River and Apple Creek, we travelled over the scenes of early Indian devastation and ravage on the outbreak of the late Indian war.

The ordinary route lay lower down the country, nearer the Mississippi, but on account of the swollen state of the numerous streams, we were obliged to follow a trail, keeping the ridge of the elevated country, and traversing a region which we thought unrivalled by any thing we had previously seen for the magnificence of its park scenery. The views both east and west occasionally ranged over a vast extent of country sprinkled with forest trees, now in all the glory of their autumnal foliage.

It was difficult to believe that those cruel scenes of Indian warfare, which we have all shuddered at in childhood, had been but a few months ago acted on the very path which we now trod;—that the war-whoop,—that demoniacal yell, which once heard is never forgotten, had sounded shrilly among those thickets, and that here the tomahawk and scalping-knife had been busy. Yet here were signs enough—here stood the tree where the Indian Agent had fallen under the knives of the Indian scouts—there we passed over the rude and neglected graves, scooped in the tangled forest, of the patrol who had been waylaid and murdered. Here lay, thick and impervious to the eye from without, situated on the crest of the hills, and commanding a view of matchless extent, the Round Grove, where the wily savage had fixed the ambush, that fell with such effect upon the ill-disciplined array which was at first opposed to his progress. Then there was the tenantless farm, with its tall palisadoes broken and marked with balls; or the more regular stockade, to whose protection the scattered inhabitants had fled in disorder at the rumour of the coming peril.

The greatest difficulty exists in keeping the different Indian tribes in amicable league with the government, from squabbling among themselves and murdering each other—and this will hardly be effected, as long as Indian blood remains what it is. The old, grey-headed warrior sings of his past deeds—shows his scalps—wears his war eagle feathers—and dances his war dance: and the young man is despised by the squaws and by himself till he have earned the title of a 'brave.' No wonder then that every opportunity is taken to quarrel and scalp one another.

Some years ago, the Sauks and Foxes surprised a young Menominie at the mouth of the Ouisconsin, near Prairie de Chien. They scalped him, and paraded his head on a pole. In retaliation, a party of Chiefs of the former tribes, coming up the Mississippi to treat with the Commander at the Prairie, were way-laid by a war-party of the Menominies and cut off. In the summer of 1831, a number of the latter encamped round a large tree on the bank of the same river, a single mile above the Fort of Prairie de Chien. The Sauks and Foxes stole into the vicinity and watched patiently till a night of debauch had disabled the males, and when their arms had been secreted, according to custom, by their own squaws—and just before dawn, when the sleep of intoxication was the heaviest, they stole on them, and in a few minutes had massacred and scalped twenty-seven men, women, and children, escaping before anything was known at the Fort. The refusal of the tribes to give up these murderers, it is said, brought on the misunderstanding which led to the war of the following spring.

The Sauks and Foxes, like the other Indian tribes, had formerly possessed lands on the eastern bank of the Mississippi, but had ceded them by treaty and had been removed to the West.

In May 1832, with what precise purpose it is difficult to say, the old chief, Black Hawk, and a portion of his tribe, contrary to the provisions of the treaty, crossed the Mississippi, and began to ascend Rock River, which had formerly belonged to them. They were computed at seven hundred warriors. The Indians all along have insisted that their original intent was not hostile; that they had no desire to injure the whites, but were determined, if attacked by them, to fight; and there is a strong presumption that this was the fact, as they had their squaws and children with them. Though pinched by hunger, they passed through the farms without depredation, till the militia having been called together, two of the Indians were killed, and then the tribes raised the war-whoop, and for a while carried all before them. Once begun, the war was waged in true Indian style, and murder and massacre spread on all sides. The panic throughout the frontier was without bounds. The militia collected together were routed on the very ground we are passing over; and it was not till a body of regular troops was brought forward that a serious check was given to them. It is believed that that check was timely, as it prevented the Winnebagoes and Pottawattomies from joining their red brethren;—indeed, many of the scalps brought into the Indian camp were taken by warriors of the former tribe. When attacked at the Ouisconsin in July, the poor misguided Indians seemed to have dwindled down to three hundred warriors. After a long pursuit through an almost inaccessible part of the country, the regular troops, about four hundred strong, with nine hundred militia, got upon the trail of the principal party at the close of that month, and on the second of August came up with the shattered remnants of their force on the Mississippi, while attempting the passage near the mouth of the Bad Axe River, where an indiscriminate massacre of men, women and children was perpetrated.

We found it a moral impossibility, while on the very scene of these late events, to get two honest men to concur in the same account of any given event during this period of excitement. The feud between the State militia and the military; and the jealousy of the citizen towards the soldier were partly reasons. For the rest, a history,—believe me, a true and unvarnished one, of the war in question, would be a chronicle of shame to many among the former; and as long as the atrocities which were committed are winked at by the government, a degree of odium must rest with the whole people among whom they are suffered to go unpunished.

The cruelty of many of the militia towards the poor Indian when once in their power, was only to be matched by the fear which they showed at meeting their enemy. Some say that cowardice can hardly be laid to their charge, for any one among them would fight any neighbour to the death who offended him; while whole detachments fled at the sound of a solitary war-whoop;—and yet, there were those among them who could with difficulty be prevented from killing the squaws and children when defenceless, and with whom scalp-taking was a subject of pride.

It is perhaps not easy to imagine the feelings of that man, who, returning to his home from a distance, finds the fire on his hearth quenched by the blood of his unoffending wife and children, and counts on the floor the mangled bodies of every member of his family. No one will wonder that that sight would almost sting human nature to madness, and that, to any but a real Christian, vengeance would almost seem a duty as well as a natural impulse;—and you could almost sympathize with that man as he follows the trail of his cruel enemy, and sates his passion in their destruction. The indiscriminate, unsparing, and ruthless manner in which Indian rage is vented alike on the guilty and the innocent, demands that, from whatever side the first provocation may have come, they must be put down, at the same time, however, it must be admitted, the first aggression is generally on the side of the white.

On approaching Fever River, and the District of the Lead Mines, the face of the country began to change its character. The soil became poorer and more stony, broken by lime-stone knolls; and from the summit of an elevated ridge, called the Pilot Knob, the eye ranges over a vast plain stretching from the banks of the river just named to the northward, with the Platte Mounds, two most singular natural eminences heaving up from the level far in the distance.

The town of Galena, which lies immediately below, is situated on Fever River, about seven miles from its junction with the Mississippi. It is the main depot for the ore collected in vast quantities in the neighbouring country, and transported thence by steam-boats to St. Louis. The population of this mining district is computed to be upwards of ten thousand.

Thus far we had taken advantage of a light public vehicle, with which we had travelled in comparative ease and security over the sod of the prairies,—always excepting a complete over-turn in the dark, soon after quitting Peoria; but here nothing of the kind was to be had, and as no steam-boat was expected to ascend the river to a higher point at this late season of the year, we had to put up with an open 'mud-waggon,' with spring seats, which we thought ourselves fortunate in being able to hire conjointly with a fourth gentleman who had been our companion from St. Louis. Our next halting place, namely, Prairie de Chien, lay seventy-five miles distant to the north; and having stowed away our chattles, we were happily extricated from the deep mud of Galena by a strain from two strong horses, and begun to jolt forward over the plain towards the Platte Mounds, taking our morning meal at a farm, doubtless, the germ of an incipient city, called by the melodious name of Hardscrabble. An attempt had been made to change it to Boston, but failed, and Hardscrabble it will probably remain. Another place in the immediate neighbourhood is called by the equally agreeable name of Small-Pox.

Lead ore is found every where in the clay and fissures of the lime-stone. It yields about sixty per cent of pure metal. Lying so far from the more regularly settled parts of the Union, this whole country is subject to a peculiar legislation. The surface of the Lead Region is, if I recollect right, divided into lots of a few hundred yards square. Any individual, let him be who he may, may come to the Land Office, and subscribing the regulations, is permitted to notify the lot on which his choice falls, and to go and dig to his heart's content, paying nothing. The digger disposes of the ore to the smelter, who is bound under heavy recognizances, to render a true account to an officer appointed by government, of the quantity of ore which he buys and the metal which he gets from it, of which government claims one tenth.

Our route led us between the Platte Mounds, which on a nearer approach we found to consist of two regularly moulded hills, connected by a band on which, mid-way, a small conical mound rises. All are evidently formed of lime-stone rock, masses of which start grotesquely from the surface. Many rivers rise in their vicinity. Our route was a solitary one—the houses being few in number and distant from each other; nor were such common-place adventures as being benighted, wet to the skin, and sleeping in the most comfortless quarters, wanting.

Towards the close of the third day after quitting Galena, we reached the Ouisconsin, a large river flowing through a deep wooded glen from the eastward. Summer and winter were contending for mastery in the foliage of the deciduous forest-trees on its steep shore. Its channel forms the direct line of communication by boats, with the waters of Fox River, a river of Green Bay in Lake Michigan—a short portage intervening. It was by the Ouisconsin that Father Marquette and his companion were conducted in 1673, by their Indian guides, into the broad streams of the Mississippi, which they were the first of their nation to behold.

A ferry conveyed us across the river, here flowing in a deep, rocky, and shady valley. Six miles yet remained to Fort Crawford at Prairie de Chien; and you may imagine our pleasure in the hope of soon gaining quarters, where we might rest after a seven days' journey, during which we had hardly taken off our clothes. In the fulness of our contentment, after we had proceeded a few miles and were about to descend from the bluffs to the level Prairie, having just overtaken the postman trudging along with his mail-bags slung over his shoulders, we politely invited him to take a seat by the driver in the 'mud-waggon,' which he thankfully accepted. Never was well-intentioned politeness worse timed—as, three minutes after, just at dusk, we found all and every thing,—six precious souls, two seats, three carpet-bags, two mail-bags, three boxes,—mats, blanket-coats, guns, rifles and cutlasses, all tumbled out, neck and heels, pell-mell into the long grass of the Prairie.

Of all overturns this was the most ludicrous and complete. Surprise was the first impulse of our minds—wonder the second—congratulation the third, and irresistible mirth the fourth. No one was hurt—no one knew how it happened—nothing was broken—no time was to be lost; so we gathered ourselves up, righted the vehicle, collected the various articles, and, when the last seemed to be replaced, remounted, and drove merrily to the Fort, where we were received by the officers as guests, with that warmth of welcome which makes the traveller feel at once at home.

At our arrival at Prairie de Chien, from the signs of the season, one might have been inclined to augur badly for the prosecution of our scheme of a further ascent of three hundred miles to the Falls.

The appearances of a commencement of the long northern winter thickened over our heads for a day or two; sleet covered the roofs of the barracks and the sides of the bluffs; and ice began to form on the *bayou* which enters into the Mississippi just below the village. However, trusting in the speedy and propitious commencement of the Indian summer, we proceeded in making the necessary arrangements for ascending the river by canoe.

The Prairie lies between the Mississippi, here flowing in a broad bed by many channels and through a wilderness of islands, and a long, precipitous, but regularly formed line of bluffs, bordering the valley to the east. It forms a beautiful, even, grassy meadow, of six miles in length by one or two broad. It is bounded to the south by the Ouisconsin. Its name is, I believe, derived from an Indian Chief,—nevertheless dogs there be in plenty, 'both mongrel, puppy, whelp, and hound, and curs of low degree.' The old French Settlement of Prairie de Chien, founded the same year as the city of Philadelphia, and occupying at the present day about as much ground as the Penitentiary of that flourishing capital, lies on the margin of the river, and consists of a few old grey trading and dwelling houses, with nothing either in architecture or position to merit further notice. It seems doomed to remain under the same spell as others of a like origin.

The French as colonists have been distinguished throughout the world for the address with which they win the good will of the Aborigines. Their efforts and their achievements in North America prove this in a most remarkable manner. Yet it may be said that this has been effected in a great measure by debasing themselves to the level of savage life, rather than raising the Indian to a higher standard.

To the north of the village, an ancient quadrangular block-house, built of squared logs, and as usual so contrived as to present eight faces—the upper part of the square standing across the angles of the lower, marks the position of the old military post, which within these few years has been superseded by a large spacious range of stone barracks, built on a gentle swell on the opposite side of the *bayou*. An Indian mound round which the new buildings were constructed, was removed in levelling the square, and forty eight bodies, some inclosed in wooden or bark coffins, were removed. The lower layer was on a level with the natural soil. Many Indian graves are scattered over the surface of the prairie in its vicinity. Fort Crawford, as the new erection is called, is calculated to afford quarters to an entire regiment, though only a few companies were there at the time of our visit.

On the west, the view is limited by the long line of heights rising directly from the right bank of the Mississippi, and only broken by the glens which give outlet to the tributary streams. That of the Bloody Run opens immediately opposite the village. From any of these heights a most singular and extensive view is gained for ten or twelve miles, of the broad river, crowded by grassy or wooded islands, many containing large ponds frequented at this season by innumerable water fowl—and also of the Prairie throughout its whole extent, with the village and Fort, the bluffs which bound it, and the fertile farms along their base.

Prairie de Chien is computed to be six hundred miles distant by water from St. Louis, and three hundred from the Falls; while from Fort Howard on Green Bay by the Fox River and the Ouisconsin, it may be one hundred and eighty. But few Indians, and those of the Menominie tribe, were in the vicinity. In the course of the spring, during the period of the floods, a steam-boat ascends the stream as far as the St. Peter's river, to convey government stores to the Two Forts; and the rest of the year, the means of communication are restricted to boats, sledges, and canoes. By employing one of the latter class, we now hoped to secure the means of proceeding; and, with considerable delay, owing to the difficulty in securing the few hands at liberty, as the lateness of the season and the fear of being frozen up on the voyage, together with the conflicting interest of certain competitors, interposed obstacles in our way,—we contrived at last, to get a number of Canadian boatmen and a large roomy birch-bark canoe into our service. To the very last moment however, such was the character of the men we had to deal with, we were never certain of our bargain holding good. Meanwhile our time passed pleasantly enough, in the society of the worthy Colonel commanding the post, and half-a-dozen officers. A barge, with a few officers and men set off up the river towards the Falls on the 21st of October, and twenty-four hours after we prepared to follow, and were agreeably surprised in being enabled to do so, as that very morning our canoe had been completely split by an accident. However, by the help of pitch, resin, strips of bark, and other aids, old Demaret our captain, to whom the slender, but shapely vessel belonged, repaired the damage :—and two hours before sun-set, you may imagine us fairly packed and afloat; our lading consisting of eight men, one woman and child, to whom we gave passage for some distance, and our three selves—in all twelve adults, besides blankets, buffalo-skins, arms, and provision for twelve days. At the village, whence we made our final start, a scene of hugging and kissing took place between divers of our paddlers and their cousins and friends of both sexes; and *Bon voyage! Bon voyage!* was echoed from the shore, as pushing into the stream, the eight paddles were plunged simultaneously into the water, and we began to stem the current. At the same instant, according to custom, the leader commenced screaming with a singularly tremulous voice, one of the innumerable boat-songs with which the Canadian *voyageurs* of the Upper Lakes and rivers, beguile their long and monotonous labours. The burden was taken up and repeated by his comrades—thus:

DEMARET. SOLO.

Derrière chez nous est un étang;
En roulant ma boule!

CHORUS.

Derrière chez nous est un étang :
En roulant ma boule !

DEMARET. SOLO.

Un canard blanc s'y va baignant
Roulis, roulant, ma boule roulant,
En roulant ma boule roulant,
En roulant ma boule.

CHORUS.

En roulant ma boule roulant,
En roulant ma boule, &c.

Our purpose this evening was merely to get fairly afloat; and accordingly, after having paddled a few miles, we encamped upon an island in the river, a little below the Painted Rocks, with a dry starlight night as a good omen over our heads; lulled by the howling of the Indians encamped in the vicinity, the barking of dogs, and other sounds which betokened that we had not yet passed out of the bounds of the farms on the Prairie. It was computed that unless prevented by unforeseen accidents, we ought to reach the Falls in six days. The whole of this time was however taken up in advancing as far as Lake Pepin, one hundred and seventy miles above the Prairie, and nearly four more were necessary for the attainment of our object. To give you the outline of our excursion at once, I will mention, that we paddled forward by day, and nightly sought some snug corner of the forest, either on the main or in the islands,—pitched our tent, raised our fire, cooked supper, sang, conversed, and looked at the stars till we were sleepy, and then betook ourselves to our buffalo-robe couch till dawn.

The whole distance to Lake Pepin, the mighty river flows through a deep valley of perhaps two miles average breadth, among innumerable islands, and under steep bluffs which rise frequently on both sides, with precipitous fronts to the height of five hundred feet. Their lower slopes near the river are mostly clothed in oak forest, and many of the summits terminated by a picturesque pile of highly-coloured rock, of eighty feet or upwards perpendicular. Above and beyond this great channel hollowed out in the country for the passage of the 'Father of Waters,' the country on both sides seems to be rolling prairie.

The beauty of the scenery,—though only the last colouring of autumn lingered on the forests and prairies,—quite took us by surprise; and nothing can be more opposite than the impressions suggested by the scenery of the Mississippi above and the Mississippi below its junction with the Missouri—here a scene of beauty and romance, there a terribly monotonous turbid and swollen stream.

Lake Pepin, of which more anon, is in fact nothing but a basin of the river, twenty miles long and three broad. It is entirely without islands, and is hemmed in by bold shores abounding with interesting details.

From the upper end, it took us three days to reach Fort Snelling, at the junction of the St. Peter's river with the Mississippi; the character of the intervening scenery is interesting, but not so much so as lower down. At the point of junction, however, it is truly romantic. Up to our arrival at the last-mentioned Fort, which lies seven miles below the Falls, the weather favoured us in an unhoped-for degree. During the week that we were the guests of the gentlemen posted there, a few inclement days passed over us, but the weather again held up so as to admit of our return between the 8th of November and the 13th, on which latter day we entered the Prairie de Chien, after an absence of three weeks. But in this interval, much came before us which was highly interesting, and my next shall go a little more into detail.

LETTER XV.

Our pleasure at the resumption of a life of autumnal adventure, similar to last year's though under different circumstances and in another region, was considerable.

I have mentioned, that uncertain as the occurrence of genial weather might now be in this latitude, we had been encouraged to hope that the delicious season, known by the name of the Indian Summer, which ordinarily intervenes between the fall of the leaf and the commencement of the severe winter of the north, might yet come to our aid in the prosecution of our excursion. It is true, the north wind blew while we were at Prairie de Chien, sprinkling the heights with sleet, and the air appeared full of the water-fowl pressing to the south—led by Him who teaches them to spread their wings upon the keen blast, and seek a milder climate before the winter come;—and though the blackbirds might be observed collecting in vast flights, and then, having received the word to go forth, rise at sun-set, and by one common impulse, follow their leaders in one narrow continuous stream over the forests and prairies in the same direction;—and though the gorgeous foliage of the painted forests, with its thousand hues of green, yellow, orange, red, was shaken to the ground,—still we were not deceived, but before the lapse of many days we saw the sleet disappear—the wind cease to agitate the river and the forest—the wild fowl pause in their passage, and, furling their pinions, alight by myriads among the islands and marshes,—and, as though by enchantment, a season settle down upon the earth, which, for its peculiar beauties, might vie with the most poetical and delicious in the circle of the year. To what shall we compare the Indian Summer? to the last bright and unexpected flash of a dying taper—to the sudden and short-lived return to consciousness and apparent hope in one stretched upon the bed of death, after the standers by have deemed him gone—or to the warm, transient, but rosy glow which will often steal over the snows of the distant Alps, after the sun is far below the Jura, and after they have been seen rearing themselves for a while, cold and ghastly white over the horizon?

During the Indian summer, the air is calm. Glistening strings of gossamer, woven by the aeronaut spider, stream across the landscape—all nearer objects are seen through a dreamy atmosphere filled with a rich golden haze, while the distance melts away in violet and purple. The surface of the river, with its moving flood of silver reflects all objects and every colour with matchless fidelity—the harsher tones of the rocks, of the deep brown forests, and of the yellow prairies appear so softened,—the reflection of their pale tints is so perfect, and such a similarity of colour and shade pervades the earth, the air and the water, that all three seem blended together. The huge piles of bleached timber which lie stranded in the shallows, or the canoes at a little distance, seem suspended in air. Whenever the silence of the solitude is broken, echoes seemed to start from every side. Every distant sound is musical: and as you glide along you might believe you were in a dream. The series of pictures presented by our even advance upon the surface of the river, seen through this medium, and under these circumstances, have left on my mind an impression of beauty which will never be effaced.

Whether we glided through the islands with their extensive flats covered with poplar and willow—the first in the series of forest trees which will hereafter cover them;—skirted the drowned lands;--paddled along the bright sand-bars, with their huge pile of drift timber;—rustled along the edge of some bright yellow field of reeds and wild rice, startling the wild fowl from their meal;—or stemmed the deep and powerful current near the foot of the bluffs, the scene presented to our passing admiration was always glorious and beautiful.

The steep line of rocky and similarly moulded summits which, commencing with Cap de Tiger, excited our admiration in the earlier part of our course, as they rose,—a line of hills cut in twain, from the right bank high into the mellowed haze, were preeminent for the beauty of their colouring and form, from the bright vermilion-coloured lichen which painted the bare rock at the summit, to the strips of open, oak-sprinkled prairie at their feet. The action of water upon the façade of these seemingly castellated hills,—groove lying beneath groove, plainly indicated the gradual formation of the broad and majestic channel by which the river had for centuries been seeking to gain the level of the ocean.

What would you have me describe to you? Sun-rise with its pale clear hues,—or sun-set with its deepening glories, as we saw it evening after evening filling the broad valley with gold and purple—both were matchlessly beautiful; but the latter was the scene of the greatest enchantment.

If the days were thus delicious, many of the nights were not the less so, and I have to exercise a species of self control not to attempt the description of each in detail. I might perhaps venture to fill half a dozen lines upon that which we termed the 'Camp of the Peak,' where we lay nestled in a dense forest, overhung by one of the noble summits I have mentioned above; or one of those spent on the islands; or the 'Camp of the Bent Bough,' but will at all events postpone them till I see what is in advance, and meanwhile give you a little idea of the people with whom we were associated.

Our progress for the first few days was far from being what we had expected. The canoe, liable to injury at all times from its extremely fragile nature, being merely a light frame-work, covered with birch bark, and held together by cross splints, and to be broken and snagged by running foul of objects in the shallows, or to be strained by the great weight which it carried, and still more by any accident in its daily conveyance to and from the shore on the backs of the men,—stood in need of constant repair.

Besides, we soon found that most, if not all our *Crapauds*, as these French Canadians are jocularly called, were in league with the boat to keep us as long on the road as possible. First, because they were rogues all. They had been born without consciences and never had had the chance of acquiring them since. Secondly, because they were paid by the day, and we were bound to feed them as long as they were in our service. Thirdly, because they saw that we were honest gentlemen, travelling for amusement and instruction—novices in the arts of the *voyageurs*, and of very different habits from the hard-grinding traders whom they usually served, who portioned out their food to them by the square inch—keeping their wages back, if they did not do their duty. You will own that here was a little too much temptation thrown in the way of men who professed no further morality than would be of very easy carriage among the savages by whom they were surrounded, and no religion beyond Indian religion.

Demaret acted as pilot, and plied the stern-paddle, as the boat was his. He had made it with his own hands, and all his life had been a *voyageur*. His qualifications and the natural turn he had for this kind of life were so marked, that we found his very companions used to twit him with having 'been born with a piece of birch-bark in his hand.' He looked like no class of human beings I ever saw, and his countenance, which was chiefly marked by the width of his mouth, bore signs of both Spanish and Indian blood. When he sang, he sang like a fox with his tail in a trap.

Garde-Pied, an old Canadian, was our bowman. Then mention we Guillaume, fat and handsome—the *farceur* of the party—the best singer, and, I believe in fact the greatest rogue amongst us, and the one who both set the roguery agoing and sustained it. Alexandre, Rousseau, and Henri, were common-place rogues—that is to say, they would be honest, if other people would be honest too. Pascal, a mulatto, held about the same tenets, though, I recollect, he had a fragment of a conscience; and, in mentioning old Julian, a Neapolitan by birth, who had been taken by the British—incorporated with the Anglo-Swiss Regiment de Meuron—seen service in India and subsequently in Canada,—where he had been discharged, and had turned Crapaud in his old age—I may say that he was the best, the most sober and most obliging man in the party, and the only one in whom real confidence could be placed.

For the rest, they were all men who would dance from night to morning at a Gombo-ball—sing profane or pastoral French songs hour after hour on the water,—drink and smoke,—cheat their creditors,—live for months in the woods,—work like slaves without grumbling, when they could not help it,—swim like otters,—maintain their French gaiety of character on most occasions, but grumble incessantly when they had nothing to grumble about. They would feed like so many hungry wolves as long as there was anything to eat, knowing no medium; and then bear the pinch of hunger with the stoicism of the Indian with whom most of them had associated from infancy.

They measured their way, not by miles, nor leagues, but by pipes; and would say,—such a point is so many pipes distant. They generally sang in their peculiar way for half an hour after a halt, solo and chorus, winding up with an Indian yell, or the exclamation, '*Hop! Hop! Sauvons-nous!*' and would then continue silently paddling with their short quick stroke, all following the time indicated by the bowman, till the pipe was out, or till they were tired; when at a signal, they would throw their paddles across the boat, give them a roll to clear the blade of the water, and then rest for a few minutes.

A compartment in the centre of the canoe in which our buffalo-robes and mats were commodiously arranged, was our ordinary couch. Here we lay in luxurious ease, reading, and chatting hour after hour.

The first certain light which broke in upon us as to the real character of the strange race with whom we had to do,—though the singular conduct which we had remarked in them at the Prairie below, had given us warning,—was early on the sixth day, when approaching a lonely trading-house, near the remarkable mountain called '*La Montagne qui se trèmpe à l'eau,*' scarce a hundred miles on our way; when their long faces, shrugs, and significant gestures gave token that something was wrong.' In effect we found that this devouring squad had,—unaided by us, as we had lived principally on water-fowl,—actually in the course of six days, made away with the whole of the provisions laid in with more than usual liberality for twelve days' consumption! Upwards of a hundred pounds of bacon, besides bread and potatoes and beans in six days! Think of that! We had, to be sure, noticed that they had brought with them a curiously shaped iron pot; originally, perhaps, a foot in depth; but which, having had the original bottom burnt out, had been furnished by some frontier tinker with a fresh one of such form and dimensions as gave the renovated vessel an added profundity of six or eight inches more. We had observed that this marvellous bowl was always piled up to the very edge with provisions: and that frequently when it was simmering and bubbling over the fire in the camp, our rogues would stand round shrouding it from too close observation. If one or another of us approached, one or two of the Crapauds would turn to us with an air of perfect famine and of the greatest tribulation—and ejaculate, '*grande misère!*' or, '*il fait frait icit!*'—giving us to understand, that while we considered our common position as one full of amusement, they deemed it to be one of uncommon trial.

Moreover, we were sometimes awakened hours after supper, when all had appeared to retire to rest for the night, it might be about one in the morning, by loud talking and joyous sounds; and peeping forth, we might see that these unhappy mortals were as brisk as lions; sitting about the fire; passing the joke from one to another;—by the help of long sharply pointed sticks, fishing up meat from the depths of that fathomless pot; and making a very hearty meal, for which, as to our certain knowledge, a hearty supper preceded it, and a no less hearty breakfast followed it at dawn—we had unfortunately no name in our vocabulary. Still, though it might cross our minds that they were a little lavish of the provisions, yet we never dreamed of a famine before we should reach Fort Snelling. However, there was now no doubt about it, and it was in vain to murmur; and here at the last trading-post we had still to lay in fresh stock.

Their songs were very interesting to us, in spite of the horrible French in which they were couched, and the nonsense they contained; as we detected in them many signs of their origin on the plains and in the vineyards of *La belle France*, though now loaded with allusions to the peculiar scenery, manners, and circumstances of the country to which they had been transplanted. In many there was an air of Arcadian and pastoral simplicity which was almost touching, at the same time that we knew that the singers had no simplicity about them, and that their character was much more that of the wolf than of the sheep. The airs were not unfrequently truly melodious, and all were characteristic, and chimed in well with our position.

I may elsewhere have given you sundry assurances of the *delights* of Indian Encampments in the forests. From the pleasant idea that these may have conveyed I would take nothing. They are many and great; and far advanced as the season was, we were yet alive to them for a month to come, even in weather that might be deemed inclement elsewhere. Lest, however, you should accuse me of a disposition to paint every thing '*couleur de rose*,' and to throw dust both in my own eyes and those of my neighbours—here follows a page of *miseries*. I remember one camp, which we called 'Cross Camp,' from the circumstance of all going wrong. It was, I believe, the second in this excursion. The weather had not yet become fairly settled. We had got entangled among the low islands, and not meeting with a place to our liking, as the evening was closing in raw and gusty, we had been obliged to betake ourselves to a shore covered with trees and jungle, and make our nest just where we should have wished to have avoided doing so.

It was a confined situation, among thickets of towering dry grass and brushwood. The canoe was unloaded, and was hauled ashore; and the Crapauds as usual made preparations for their fire, ten or twenty yards from that of our trio. The difficulty of fixing the tent which we carried with us, in such a direction that we should be free from smoke, was considerable, as the wind came down on the river in flaws, and no one could decide from what quarter. Time had been lost in seeking a good camping-ground, and the twilight fell on us before all was in order for the night. The tent had been pitched in the midst of opposing opinions:—when suddenly the cry of fire was raised. We saw the wind scattering the embers among the brushwood, and all hands were necessary to put out the flames, which, had they got a-head, would have burnt the canoe in the first place, and singed us out of our hole in the next. By beating them down with our coats and blankets, this was effected; and having broken down the brush on all sides, we returned to our labours near the fires. Every thing was mislaid, having been chucked out of the way of danger in the hurry—the axe was not to be found, and to collect the various articles necessary for our nightly accommodation and entertainment, was a work of time and patience. Of the former, we had plenty; of the latter but little, in the night in question.

Then came a terrific gust from the overhanging bluffs, and we found that the tree under which we had carefully pitched the tent, was rotten at heart, and gave decided tokens of a probable fall. The idea was not a pleasant one. All went wrong. We had not yet decided upon making use of the Crapauds as our cooks.—'Nothing easier,' exclaimed I, 'than to boil the coffee.'—'Nothing easier,' observed Pourtales, ' than to make a handsome fry of potatoes, and to roast a couple of wild ducks in the French style, with a savoury waistcoat of lard ! ' ' Nothing easier than to make a beef-steak !'—said M'Euen ! So to work we went, each in his own way, and following his own device, while he snarled at that of his neighbour. ' Nothing easier than to find fault with what one does not understand ! ' thought each and every one of us.

Well, the coffee was on the fire and ' progressing'—the process necessary for its perfection being after all the most simple of those under trial ;—the potatoes were washed, peeled, and sliced ;—the beef-steaks, skewered on long sticks, were bent towards the embers ;—the mallards were plucked, drawn, and spitted—how, may not be said,—but exposed to the hot smoke and flame their waistcoats were kept in a constant flare and frizzle. Basting was out of the question, except with cold water ; and the office of dredging-box was performed by the frequent gust, which covered them and the beef-stakes and the sliced potatoes with snow-white ashes.

Now imagine the consequences of being all cross, and overwhelmed with misfortunes—the miseries of cooking and camping on a windy night—difference of opinion—smoke in the eyes—fire at the finger ends—shakes—overturns—wet logs—mistakes—and bitterness of spirit !

No sooner have you got matters into something like order, but the wind veers a point or two, and the smoke which had hitherto sailed off sideways from your tent, leaving your night quarters warm and smokeless, as it always ought, is now driven directly against it, and you have no alternative, but either to bear the reverse, or to strike and pitch it anew.

You hang your coat, or blanket, or buffalo robe,—which may have been soaked by being undermost in the leaking canoe,—on a forked stick to dry, placing it to the windward of the fire, to keep it out of the smoke and sparks;—and next time you look at it, you see it singeing among the glowing embers, into which possibly a careless friend, or more probably the wind, has precipitated it. In utter despair you collect a number of very indispensable articles,such as straps and ropes, not to be replaced;—and you go hang them carefully to a distant sapling, far away from the ordinary passage;—when you next look for them you see that some kind friend has by chance cut the tree down in the dark, and consigned it and its charge to the flames. You go valourously forth to cut a tent-pole or another log for the fire,—and, not having the true backwoodsman's fling with the axe, come hopping back in five minutes with a neat chip in your shin.

Jaded and gloomy, while the supper is cooking, you lie down with a book in your hand, say for example, 'Burton on Melancholy,' which by the by, was the only work, besides a Bible, that we had with us. You stretch yourself on your blanket in your corner of the tent, but find that besides lying on an unfortunate slope which makes your heels rise higher than your head, there is under you a stubborn knot of hard wood, which no coaxing of yours can extract, and which nothing but a complete turn out, and a forcible application of the axe, will rid you of: and so forth! But all these are trifles to the miseries of carrying on a partnership in cooking in a dark windy night.

You advance to shift your burning supper to a safer place,—are maddened by the puff of pungent smoke that fills your eyes—start back,—tread on some long crooked branch, one end of which extends into the darkness and the other props the coffee-pot, when to your extreme surprise and the undisguised wrath of the superintendant of that particular branch of the duty, the vessel makes a jump into the air and overturns its contents into the tasty dish of potatoes frizzling below. Then follows a scene of objurgation, recrimination, and protestation.

But, *n'importe*—the coffee is replaced—the beefsteaks get thoroughly burned on one side;—the ducks are pronounced to be cooked because the waistcoat is reduced to a perfect cinder, and because the birds insist upon taking fire. The 'medicine-chest,' as we called our store box, is brought out, and preparations for a meal seriously attempted. It is soon found that notwithstanding all losses and mischances there are still two things left, appetite and abundance; and though nothing perhaps is done with real gastronomic nicety, yet after a day spent in the open air, every thing has a relish which no sauce could give. As you have doubtless experienced, nothing predisposes to complacent good humour so much as a satisfied appetite, and by the time supper is ended, and the moon has risen, and the bright embers free from smoke are glowing in the wind,—you are ready to laugh together at every petty vexation. However, we learned wisdom at the 'Cross Camp,' and forthwith hired Rousseau to look to our cooking at his own fire—keeping possession of the coffee-pot alone, and henceforth our '*miseries*' were very sensibly diminished.

La Montagne qui se trémpe à l'eau, lies about one hundred miles above Prairie de Chien. It is remarkable as being completely surrounded by the waters of the Mississippi. The Indians have a tradition that on a certain day in the year it always sinks a little into the earth.

We had passed the domains of the Winnebagoes, and were now in the country inhabited by the tribe of the Dacota Indians or Sioux, one of the most numerous of the present day, inhabiting a wide extent of country between the Missouri and Mississippi.

Their villages, some of which are very strikingly situated, that on *Prairie à l' Ail* for instance,—were all deserted, as the Indians were now absent on their hunting grounds. Many, however, lingered on the river, and we now saw daily some of them encamped on the banks in their commodious conical skin tents;

and the ordinary silence of our encampments was frequently broken by the distant howling of the Indian dogs, or the singing and yelling of the savages.

Lake Pepin lay in our path, soon after the renewal of our stock of provisions as before alluded to; and the passage was looked forward to with curiosity by us, and a species of awe by the Crapauds, as its surface is often agitated by storms, and many are the terrors of a long spit of sand about the centre, which juts far into the lake from the westward under the name of the *Pointe aux Sables*.

We had been detained nearly a whole day by an accident and the illness of Demaret, a few miles below the southern extremity, where the thermometer of Fahrenheit registered fifteen degrees below the freezing point during the night, while the surface of the river was darkened by a strong north wind; however, we moved forward to a point of yellow sand at the entrance towards evening, and, finding that the old saying, 'sun down, wind down,' was likely to be verified, prepared for the passage during the ensuing night. By degrees the miniature billows with their crests of foam diminished in size, and sunk into their bed, and an hour after sunset the whole surface was as tranquil as a sheet of silver. Under such auspicious circumstances, our men were induced to proceed, and our frail canoe glided over the broad surface for some hours without interruption. The ordinary mode of navigation takes you across a bight in the shore, to the foot of the bluffs which bound to the east, and along them as far as the celebrated *Cap à la Fille*, or Maidens' Rock, when an attempt is generally made to cross the broadest part of the lake, weather the *Pointe aux Sables*, and get round a rocky headland, which forms the division between the upper and lower portions of Lake Pepin, after which five or six miles bring you to the northern inlet.

As we neared the base of the Maiden's Rock, a ruddy light showed us that our acquaintances in the barge, with whom we had come in contact more than once during the past week, and who had passed us at our last halting place, had been induced to lie to for the night in the sheltered cove at its foot. A moment's halt was allowed for an exchange of salutations, but in pursuance of our object, we judged it advisable to attempt the *traversée*, as the wind gave notice of again springing up; and proceeding, we left them to their repose, and directed the bow of the canoe towards the dark Cape on the opposite shore. Meanwhile, the sky clouded up; the moon and stars peeped by fits through the fissures in the fleecy clouds, the waves began to rise, and to heave the brittle vessel under us in an unwonted manner, straining her so as to render constant attention to baling necessary. However, the energies of the Crapauds, though their leader was disabled by the fever and ague, were excited; and with an occasional yell and cry of encouragement, we perceived that we were making advance. Long however, as the wind was against us, we saw the dreaded *Pointe aux Sables* gleaming to the leeward; and it was not without thankfulness, that, after upwards of an hour's hard struggle and unremitted labour, we weathered the great Cape, and got into calmer water. '*Nous sommes sauvés! Nous sommes sauvés! Maintenant la pipe!*' said our old bowman, as he threw down his paddle behind the bow, and gave the signal for a short repose.

The termination of another hour found us stemming the current of the Mississippi again, as it poured into the Lake amid poplar islands, on one of which we speedily encamped. I have mentioned that from hence three days were occupied in reaching Fort Snelling. The wind turning more to the southward, gave us an opportunity of rigging and hoisting a blanket as a sail, under shadow and favour of which our Crapauds smoked their pipes in luxurious idleness. For all the wonders and remarkable points on the passage,—the entrance of the river St. Croix, La Grange, Pointe des Pins, Bois de Médecine, &c.' I must refer you to Schoolcraft, Carver, and other writers on this distant country. We passed more than one permanent village of the Sioux, now all deserted; the houses were made of rude poles covered with pieces of oak-bark, and swarmed with fleas, numerous as the dust. In their vicinity were seen the dead bodies of their chiefs, wasting in the air, enclosed in rude wooden cases, elevated upon scaffolds raised eight or ten feet above the surface.

Many of the Sioux still lingered on the river, and would have perhaps given us more of their presence at our encampments than might have been agreeable, had we halted in their immediate vicinity. On one occasion, a large canoe full of Indians came to us just as we had landed, with every disposition to do as they had done before, watch our movements,—and wait till we should ask them to partake of our hospitality; but all of a sudden, by common consent, they stole back to their canoe, and slipped down the stream. They had seen Demaret brought on shore, wrapped up in his blankets, and placed before the fire sick and helpless; and it was probable that the idea of Cholera, from which the Indians on the Mississippi had suffered greatly the preceding year, had occurred to them. A large number were encamped on the opposite side all night, where they whooped and whistled around their tents; but not one could be lured to venture near us. The following day,—it was that of our arrival at the Fort,—we came upon a very large encampment of the same tribe, stretching along the forested shore, just above a range of beautiful white sandstone acclivities. There may have been thirty or forty lodges; among which we landed, partly from curiosity, and partly to barter for Indian pipes and ornaments, of which my comrade was desirous of making a collection.

We found very few males in the lodges, but squaws, children and dogs, in swarms. The latter, a small sharp-nosed, noisy set, proclaimed war with us from our first appearance, and howled and yelped as long as we remained. While Pourtales was ducking and diving from one skin tent to another, in search of Indian valuables, in exchange for beads, sword-blades, and tobacco, of which his trading articles consisted; and M'Euen was occupied in studying the picturesque groups allured by our visit to the upper extremity of the camp,—it was my lot to be otherwise engaged. An exceedingly ugly old squaw, who had long attempted to gain M'Euen's attention and co-operation in some sly project which seemed incomprehensible to him, seeing me approach, addressed herself to me, and gave me plainly to understand that I was wanted elsewhere. I thought there could be no harm in seeing what the mystery was, and forthwith submitted to her guidance, contrary to the advice of my comrade, who seemed to have conceived an ill impression of the old sybil's design, and favoured me with many well-meant cautions.

Well, she led and I followed among the lodges, till we had gained the lower part of the camp. On the road she entertained me with a variety of gestures, of which, all I could say was, that they may have been very significant to one who had seen them before, but that at that moment they were all very novel and surprising to me. In fact I understood none of them. However, I did what others might have done;—I gesticulated at hap hazard in return, and made many signs of intelligence, which doubtless were quite as great a puzzle to her. She now approached one of the dark-coloured conical tents—pulled aside a skin which concealed the low entrance,—gave a dog, which came bolting out, a knock on the nose, which sent him away yelping,—and made me a sign which I understood to be an intimation that I should enter. This I did by bending myself double, and staggering into the interior, which might form a circular area of perhaps two yards in diameter. In came the old squaw after me, carefully closing the skin entrance. Stepping over the fire in the middle, and squatting down on my hams, to get out of the smoke which filled the upper part of the wigwam, I was enabled to look around.

On my right sat an old Sioux warrior in his breech-cloth, mocassins, and dingy blanket. He was, like many of his tribe, finely modelled, and with an agreeable cast of face. To the left was seated a young girl, about ten years old, garbed in the dark blue petticoat commonly worn by her sex, with a blanket over her shoulders. Her neighbour was a male, about the same age. Three aged squaws, including my conductress, filled up the remainder of the space round the small heap of red embers, which with their white ashes, occupied the centre. Though all the three females were patterns of ugliness, both in persons and physiognomy, I think that the old squaw who had enticed me hither bore away the palm; and there we sat, crowded together with our noses over the little fire. Sufficient light was afforded from the top of the cone, where an aperture was left to give issue to the smoke, and by divers cracks in the skins, to see this; and moreover that the wigwam contained nothing beyond the most ordinary Indian utensils and furniture. A most affectionate grunt and shake of the hand passed between the old Sioux, the squaws, and myself, the instant I seated myself; and then as a matter of course, the small red-stone pipe was filled with tobacco and *kinnikkinick*, lighted, and passed round from one to another.

After a brief silence, followed by a few explanatory words, as I supposed, between the elders of the party, the Indian turned to me, made me a speech, accompanied with appropriate gestures. He pointed to the girl and then to the boy, both of whom were evidently in poor health, and I was now not slow in ascertaining the purpose of my being brought here—which was neither more nor less than to act the doctor and to cure his family. This, though I am no physicianer, set me perfectly at ease, as we had medicine in plenty in the canoe, at his service, and that of the strongest and most efficacious kind, if properly administered. After listening with becoming gravity, I grunted in the most approved fashion, to signify my perfect intelligence and readiness to do as he desired, and then proceeded to examine my patients. One thing you may depend upon; I resolved, if I could do them no good, not to do the poor creatures any harm.

During an interval of utter silence I felt the pulses of the two children—opened their mouths and peeped at their tongues, and speedily satisfied myself that they must have the fever and ague, that being the common disease of the season and country. Hereupon, turning to the warrior, I gave a grunt of interrogation, being one which ascends the scale about half an octave; and followed it by pointing to the children and giving a violent shiver, thereby hazarding my opinion as to the kind of malady by which they were afflicted.

The general satisfaction which this announcement gave, produced a chorus of sounds such as might proceed from the well furnished stye of a Pennsylvanian farmer on the introduction of a plentiful supply of squashes; and, emboldened by my success, I proceeded forthwith, by aid of a calabash of water and an ordinary degree of assurance, to prescribe and administer sundry harmless pills which I fetched from the canoe, at the rate of two to the girl and three to the boy; and after signifying to the old warrior and his squaws that I had done what I could, but that they must look to the Great Spirit for cure, and giving them a few biscuits,—I left them amidst a clamour of sounds which doubtless were meant for blessings and as marks of admiration, though they would hardly have been interpreted as such in a civilized country.

The curiosity of Pourtales and M'Euen to know my adventures, was met by a corresponding air of mystery on my part, such as did credit to my newly acquired Indian title of 'The Great Medicine!'

Our visit terminated, and we proceeded. Towards evening we descried the long looked-for Fort with its towers and imposing extent of wall crowning the high angular bluff at whose base the upper branch of the St. Peters enters the Mississippi; and paddling swiftly up the lower channel, a large triangular island separating the two,—we landed and were most hospitably received by the officers on duty. We were forthwith furnished with quarters in the Fort above, while the Crapauds pitched a tent under the shadow of the bluff by the water's edge, got their canoe on shore, and set their enormous pot a boiling forthwith. I believe they never saw the bottom of it, nor suffered it to cool during the whole week of their stay. They did not forget whenever we visited them to talk a great deal about '*misére!*' at the same time that they had nothing to do but what they loved best,—eat and sleep. They are a singular race, half Indian, half French, with a dash of the prairie wolf.

Meanwhile we had been admitted to full participation in the rites of hospitality within the Fort, and were furnished with every needful accommodation. We spread our buffalo skins and blankets in an occupied apartment, and slept in quiet; not forgetting however in the course of the evening to ascend one of the bastions, and listen to the roar of the Great Falls rising on the night air at a distance of seven miles.

LETTER XVI.

THE military post at the junction of the St. Peter's River with the main stream, is the most northerly station maintained by the United States in the valley of the Mississippi. The military Reservation on which it lies, purchased by Government from the Sioux, forms a parallelogram of eighteen miles by seven. The fortification has much more pretension both to regularity of design and picturesque situation than any of its fellows along the frontier,—the outer wall enclosing a lozenge-shaped area of considerable size, surrounded by the barracks, officers' quarters, and other offices. The magazine and round bastion are at one extremity, and the commander's house at the other nearest the angle of the rock overlooking both rivers. Only three companies were stationed here at the time of our visit. A picturesque octagonal tower stands at the termination of the southern line of wall overlooking the sloping ascent from the St. Peter's. The height of the foundation above the rivers may be upwards of one hundred feet. It has an appearance of strength which is hardly confirmed on a nearer survey ; and the impression you carry away is, that for the purposes of Indian warfare it is far too strong and important a work, while its position would not avail it much in an attack from regular troops, as the interior is commanded from a rise on the land immediately behind. The idea is further suggested, that the strong stone wall was rather erected to keep the garrison in, than the enemy out. Though adapted for mounting cannon if needful, the walls were unprovided with those weapons; and the only piece of ordnance that I detected out of the magazine, was an old churn thrust gallantly through one of the embrasures. We were however far from complaining of the extra expense and taste which the worthy officer whose name it bears had expended on the erection of Fort Snelling, as it is in every way an addition to the sublime landscape in which it is situated.

The view from the angle of the wall at the extreme point, is highly romantic. To your left lies the broad deep valley of the Mississippi, with the opposite heights descending precipitously to the water's edge; and to the right and in front, the St. Peter's, a broad stream, worthy from its size, length of course, and the number of tributaries which it receives, to be called the Western Fork of the Great River itself. It is seen flowing through a comparatively open vale, with swelling hills and intermingling forest and prairie, for many miles above the point of junction. As it approaches the Mississippi, the volume of water divides into two branches; that on the right pursues the general course of the river above, and enters the Mississippi, at an angle of perhaps fifty degrees, directly under the walls of the Fort; while the other, keeping to the base of the high prairie lands which rise above it to a notable summit called the Pilot Knob, enters the Mississippi lower down. The triangular island thus formed between the rivers lies immediately under the Fort. Its level surface is partially cultivated, but towards the lower extremity thickly covered with wood. Beyond their junction, the united streams are seen gliding at the base of high cliffs into the narrowing valley below. Forests, and these of the most picturesque character, interspersed with strips of prairie, clothe a great portion of the distant view.

A little cluster of trading houses is situated on the right branch of the St. Peter's, and here and there on the shores, and on the island, you saw the dark conical tents of the wandering Sioux. A more striking scene we had not met with in the United States, and hardly any that could vie with it for picturesque beauty, even at this unfavourable season. What must it be in spring, when the forests put forth their young leaves, and the prairies are clothed in verdure! From the summit of the Pilot Knob, surmounted by the tomb of an Indian Chief, the view is most extended and interesting; comprising both rivers before and after their junction, the Fort in all its details, and a wide stretch of level country to the north and west beyond the Great Falls. The Falls were of course a main object of our curiosity, but for a few days we were prevented from visiting them by very rough and wet weather. In the meantime we were daily in the lodges of the Sioux and the Chippeways encamped near the Reservation, or near the trading houses. Pourtales was, as usual, in his element among them, and almost lived in the wigwams—smoking and eating with the inmates; powwowing and grunting with the old chiefs; bartering with the young ones; winning the regards of the young squaws by admiration and beads, and of the older ones by tobacco. Even M'Euen seemed to have caught the 'Indian fever.' Though most of the chiefs of note were absent, one or two old superannuated warriors of the Dacota nation were in the vicinity, and among them Little Crow, who in younger days had owned the British King as his Great Father. He seemed to retain a very lively recollection of the times when he had been leagued with the red-coats; and being in some measure led to conceive that I was here as the unworthy representative of his Majesty, we smoked together in token of mutual respect; after which he made me a long speech, in which he sent his compliments to his Majesty, or something tantamount to it, and forthwith we exchanged gifts. His grand-daughter made me, moreover, a present of one of the red-stone pipes, (argil tinctured by oxide of iron found in one single spot in the whole Indian country—about four days journey) from hence—which I graciously received as a gallant plenipotentiary would do, with a satisfied grunt, and a return of beads, compliments, and tobacco.

Many of the Sioux struck us as being among the handsomest Indians we had seen. They were distinct in feature as well as in many of their habits from the few Chippeways in the neighbourhood, who, though the tribes might be considered hostile, still met their foes on the Reservation without committing violence,

The Chippeways erected long, low, wigwams of bark, covered with a semi-circular roof; whereas the habitations of the Sioux are conical, and formed of skins, as already described. The Chippeways are celebrated for their language, which is considered the court language of the northern Indians, and for the beauty of their ornamental dresses, in which stained porcupine quills are most cunningly employed as embroidery. They come here to trade and exchange their bundles of skins for powder, shot, and blankets.

To while away the time, arrangements were made as well as circumstances would admit, to get a sufficient number of Indians together to form a ball-play, one of the most celebrated games of the North American Indians, and frequently played with great effect by several hundreds ranged on either side. You may recollect the surprise and massacre of the garrison at Fort Michilimackinac in the course of the last century, by a strong party of Indians, gathered together with the ostensible object of engaging in this game, which admits of the display of great energy both of body and mind.

On the present occasion so few Indians could be brought together, that the scene, though amusing, was not as exciting as it would otherwise have been. The girls first played in their own clumsy manner, contending with each other with grotesque zeal, in their heavy tight long petticoats. A young squaw, called 'Sounding Blanket,' the comeliest of the bevy, was the winner. Then the men had their turn. The game is precisely that which we call hockey, with the exception, that a stick with a kind of netted scoop at the end is used. With this the ball is taken from the ground, and thrown towards the goal. After the play, they danced for us a number of their dances; and then came the distribution of the present intended for them. The heap of bacon and meal was dealt out by one of the Indians to the girls, who carried it off in their blankets. Then the males set to work to make fair division of the powder and shot, which was portioned forth by the same distributor by handfulls into opposite corners of their blankets; when, after a round of hand-shaking, off they stole to their several wig-wams, with the powder dangling at one side, and the shot at the other.

In mentioning the details of the landscape at St. Peter's, I have omitted one feature in it which is peculiar. The upper stratum of the country, in which these rivers have grooved their deep channels, consists of beds of limestone resting upon thick layers of the purest and whitest sand imaginable and wherever the acclivity is precipitous, and the latter are exposed to the air, they form from their brilliant hue, a remarkable trait of the land scenery.

A few miles below the Fort, a small subterraneous rivulet comes rippling out of a cavern, called by the Indians the 'House of Stone.' The cave may be traced for a very considerable distance into the bowels of the earth, under the limestone, and altogether within the sand bed, and a more beautiful sight than that presented by the snow-white walls, roof and flooring, with the crystal stream meandering over the floor, I have rarely seen. No mound or tumulus is known to exist in this neighbourhood, but there is a most singular mass of sandstone, lying on the open Prairie about twenty-five miles to the south east of Fort Snelling. It is perfectly isolated, eighty feet high, with a base line of from thirty to forty feet in length. It tapers irregularly, and has an area of about three feet square on the summit as far as can be guessed, as it is inaccessible. It is called the 'Standing Stone' by the Indians, and considered as a 'Great Medicine.'

But the Falls of St. Anthony![1] The first fine day we turned our faces in the direction of the Hahamina! 'the Laughing Water,' as the Indian language, rich in the poetry of nature, styles this remote cataract,—for cataract it is, despite its insignificant height compared with others. Here the Mississippi, after a course of three hundred miles, after draining a dreary region, where it would appear that a species of chaos still reigns, and the land and water are not yet fairly separated from each other,—commences the second great division of its remaining course of upwards of two thousand miles to the Ocean.

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[1] The dimensions of the Falls of St. Anthony, having been variously and often incorrectly stated, the writer gives the following, obtained at Fort Snelling from actual survey. From the right bank to the island, 634 feet; the island, 276 feet; the left hand fall, 300 feet; whole breadth of the river, 1210 feet. The perpendicular height varies in different parts, from 30 to 25 feet.

The surface of the river at the St. Peter's, has been calculated to be elevated 680 feet above the tide water. Above the Falls, the breadth is between five and six hundred yards, and below, it contracts in a narrow gorge to one third that width, till it reaches the Fork, and forms its junction with the St. Peter's. The long line of the Fall, which is in all its parts more or less interrupted by the fragments of the limestone which fall down as the force of the water undermines them by the removal of the soft sand underneath, is further interrupted near the left bank by an island covered with trees. A second island stands in the river, in advance of the right hand division of the Fall, with steep perpendicular sides, and bastion-like angles, resulting from the peculiar geological formation of the district.

Though I admit that the whole had the appearance of an immense wear, and that the open face of the country for many miles round, can hardly lay claim to picturesque beauty, yet the vast size of the body of water thus seen leaping from a higher to a lower region, rendered the scene truly majestic. It is still the mighty Mississippi!

This country is rich in Indian traditions, and the

Falls of St. Anthony are not without theirs. They tell you that here a young Dacota mother, goaded by jealousy,—the husband of her children having taken another wife,—unmoored her canoe above the Great Fall, and seating herself and her children in it,—sang her death song, and went over the foaming acclivity in the face and amid the shrieks of her tribe. And often, the Indian believes, when the nights are calm, and the sky serene,—and the dew-drops are hanging motionless on the sprays of the weeping birch on the island,—and the country far and wide is vibrating to the murmur of the cataract,—that then the misty form of the young mother may be seen moving down the deceitful current above, while her song is heard mingling its sad notes with the lulling sound of 'the Laughing Water!'

But we must turn our faces southward, for the Indian summer is past—the lagging files of the water fowl are scudding before the wind, and another week may curb the mighty Mississippi with a bridle of ice.—Another week in fact did so, but ere that, paddle, current, and sail had carried us far on our way south, as you may now hear.

Our intercourse with the inhabitants of Fort Snelling only strengthened that feeling of good will which will always make me happy to meet an officer of the United States' army.

The signal was given—the Crapauds, who had had all their time to themselves, packed up their big kettle with many a shrug and exclamation of '*misère*,' grasped their paddles, paid their compliments to their chums ashore, and betook themselves to their songs and their pipes.

In returning, both wind and current favoured us so far, that by the evening of the second day we reached Lake Pepin, across the upper part of which we careered before a strong north wind in a most marvellous fashion, under a broad blanket, double-reefed. A large flight of snow-white swans rose from a shallow cove just as we entered it, and, startled by our approach, hastened with their trumpet voice and broad vans flapping to the southward. We passed the Cape; and then stood over for the *Cap à la fille*, which rose with its neighbour prominently in figure and height from the long line of steep bluffs forming the eastern boundary.

As we passed the *Pointe aux Sables*, we regretted that the approach of twilight forbade a search after the pretty cornelians and geodes with which it abounds. The Loon, too, that ill-throated bird, boding storm and tempest, had given us more than one warning-scream from the inhospitable shore; and there were other signs betokening a gale, which could not be lost sight of. Though the sun had gone down in beauty, painting the rocks and prairies to the eastward in splendid colours, and glowing on the face of the calming waters, we pushed impatiently forward for the cove at the foot of the Maiden's Rock, which was both the nearest and safest haven, and reached it shortly after twilight. Here we took possession of the camp which our acquaintances had occupied a fortnight before; having unpacked and hauled up the canoe, which, half turned over, and propped up to the leeward with the fire in advance, formed a capital shelter for the Canadians. We pitched our tent and made our own fire a hundred paces deeper in the glen, in a spot where a Chippeway bravado dangled to a bough in the form of a hoop, such as scalps are stretched on, stuck round with feathers, and with a red arrow pointing to the Sioux villages,—and while the wind howled all night in the tops of the trees, and the lake burst in on the adjoining headland, and the clang of the swans and wild geese might be heard during the lull of the tempest winging their way southward,—we lay in the most delicious little sheltered camp ever contrived. Over us to the north, rose the perpendicular and picturesque rock, from whence, according to the tradition, an Indian girl, named Dark Day, Sappho-like, some half a century ago, took that leap which cures love as well as ambition. Poor girl! the steep limestone cliff will be her memorial as long as the world endures.

The following morning brought no cessation of the gale, and as, from our place of retreat we could see that the light fresh waters of Lake Pepin were running and boiling like a miniature sea, so that no frail bark like ours could live,—we unanimously felt disposed to take the rest and leisure thus given, and remain where we were. Nothing could suit the Crapauds better. It was one day more to their pay,—the provision sack and the whiskey-keg were full,—and a rare day they made of it!

The summit of the perpendicular rock, which terminates the *Cap à la Fille*, rises about five hundred feet over the Lake, and the leap may be nearly one-third of the whole height. As we looked forth from the summit early in the morning, across the troubled surface of the lake, of which it commands a wide view; a dense column of smoke from the opposite side gave us intimation that the Prairies were on fire. The spread of the conflagration on the low grounds directly opposite, which drew our attention at intervals during the day, continued unabated; and as evening approached, other columes of smoke springing up in all directions, both on the summit of the opposite range of mountains and in the vallies at their feet, showed us that the Indians had taken advantage of the driving wind to fire the country for a great many miles inland. The scene which presented itself from the summit of the rock on the south side of our dell, when the sun, which had been hidden all day, just before setting, peered out windy and red, between long bars of cloud in the southwest—and from that time till long after dark, was one of the most sublime and extraordinary you can conceive, and a great contrast to the repose which reigned in the sheltered glen at our feet, where glistened our little tent and fires, and where the men might be seen lying under the shade of the canoe.

On the opposite side of the troubled sheet of water in the middle ground, over which the rock impended, the range of western bluffs was seen to incline inland, behind the *Pointe aux Sables*, leaving a wide tract of country, partly forest and partly prairie, between their foot and the shore. A singularly conical and prominent hill rose abruptly from the middle of this plain. Around this detached eminence, which, swathed as it was in the smoke of the burning prairies beyond, seemed like a volcano, the fire had been concentrating itself during the earlier hours of the day, now advancing in one direction till checked by a dense tract of forest or a river, and then rushing on in another, and rolling over the summit or the base of the mountains. At sunset, the flame seemed to have gathered full strength, and to have reached a long tract of level grassy prairie nearer the shore, upon which it then swiftly advanced, leaving a black path in its trail. Here we saw a bright red line, a couple of miles in range, advancing majestically over the wide prairie. In one place the progress of the fire, effectually checked by a small river opposite, died away or edged over the country with slower progress. In another, after being seemingly choked, it would burst forth with redoubled fury, sending bright jets of flame far on the wind. There again the light-blue smoke was suddenly changed to dark brown, as the conflagration burst upon a mass of grosser materials for destruction than the grass dry of the prairie. We calculated at this time that the fire spread over a tract of nearly twelve miles in length, while the distant glare upon the clouded horizon showed that it was raging far inland. The whole evening, the lake, the Maiden's Rock, the clouds, and the recesses of the glen, were illuminated by the flames, while, gaining the rank growth on the border of the lake and the brow of the distant mountains, the country opposite blazed like tinder in the wind; and from the summit of the Maiden's Rock, which we again ascended before we retired to rest—the scene was fearfully grand. It is difficult to calculate the advance of the flames on the dry level prairie, in the van of a strong and steady wind, but we should think it was at least eight miles per hour. The scene, whether I have succeeded in giving you a faint impression of it or no, was an extraordinary one,—such as many may read of but few ever see, and we were in raptures at our good fortune. Our vagabonds were in raptures too! They had privily got hold of the whiskey barrel, and made too free with it. We had descended from our nocturnal climb, and were preparing for our repose, when an unusual hubbub from the other camp drew our attention. They had been quiet as mice all day,—no wonder! Something seemed to call for interference, and on repairing thither we found to our astonishment Demaret raving-drunk and furious—Guillaume stripped and ready to fight to the death—Alexandre tongue-valiant and audacious—old Garde-Pied obstreperous—Henri stupid—Julian as usual, grave and sententious, even when in liquor—and Rousseau and Pascal the only sober men in the group,—whether owing to the strength of their heads, or the strength of their consciences I will not say. After a wordy squabble, which accorded well with the glare of the fires and the rattling of the dry branches over our head, we succeeded in quelling the fray;—saw them put up their knives, put on their shirts, give up fighting, and promise to go to bed under the canoe like naughty children.

The offending barrel was reconducted to its proper place in our camp, from which it had been smuggled while we were thinking of any thing rather than its contents; and, placed at our feet within the wings of the tent, our arms within reach, we judged that the gust had blown by, and doubted not but they would be sober and penitent by morning. But we had to do with a strange race, governed as much by a sense of necessity and fear, as by love.

A few high words heard from time to time kept us on the *qui vive*, but harmony seemed at length pretty well restored. Then came divers visits, unexpected, but irresistibly ludicrous.

The first who advanced, stumbling over the broken ground among the bushes, was Julian. He stood before our fire with a grave white face, and alluding to the fray, enlarged upon his own love of peace and order;—spoke of his age, and consequent desire to keep out of disorder, closing with the assurance, that, as to his comrades, he feared that they had all taken more whiskey than was good for them.

A few minutes after came Guillaume, bottle in hand; and with infinite politeness of manner stammering—*excusez ! voulez vous nous accorder encore un petit brin de viskey,*'—think of that ! as serious as a judge ! Receiving a stern negative, he retired.

Then came Demaret, staggering and stuttering as if he had a piece of bark in his mouth; and well he might, for he was in that particular stage of drunkenness when a man, do what he will, cannot close his jaws. He modestly repeated the request just recorded, adding that *les jeunes gens* were particularly desirous to have a little more to drink. Meeting with the same steady refusal, he began to threaten how they might take the canoe and leave us to shift for ourselves; but was forthwith sent about his business.

Lastly came Rousseau, with whom, a sober man, having also more cause to feel under obligation to us than the rest, we could arrange not to set off too early with our tipsy crew, whatever the weather might be; but to remain here till we saw whether they were to be trusted to do their duty.

This settled, we betook ourselves to rest: the wind continued to howl dolefully among the branches and rocks over us, for some hours; shaking the dry leaves about our tent in fearful wise. The spirit of Dark Day might have been abroad. However, towards morning, it abated a little, and came round in our favour; so that at day-break, finding the Crapauds were sober and ashamed of themselves, we launched the canoe, quitted our blackened camp,—for the whole of the grass had been fired over night—and were carried swiftly, under our little blanket sail, out of the

Lake into the Mississippi. Before dark, we had made a good advance of seventy miles from the Maiden's Rock.

The close of another short day, during the course of which we glided on with the combined force of paddle and current through the most picturesque division of the whole river, saw us encamping in the forest, near the recent battle ground at the mouth of the Bad Axe River, within thirty miles of Prairie de Chien. We had landed here in ascending, and seen the bones of the poor misguided Indians, who, driven to extremity, perishing with famine, encumbered with their wives and children, hotly pursued by both the regular troops and the militia—here tried to cover the retreat of their families over the deep, broad, island-chequered bosom of the Mississippi. The Warrior, an armed steam-boat, which had been sent up the river for the purpose, opposed the passage, and some hundred men, women, and children were shot down—some on the bank—some in the marshes—others in the act of swimming: and we saw proof enough that neither age nor sex had been spared.

The sympathy I feel for the poor benighted Indian, the child of impulse and passion—cozened, mystified, driven to the wall, and degraded far below his natural degradation, by his communion with those who call themselves Christians, and pride themselves upon superiority of gifts and advantages, rises above the horror excited by the details of their savage cruelty, when their wrath is once excited; and makes me inclined to consider them as the aggrieved party. The Winnebagoes, true to the character of treachery they had long borne, turned their knives and tomahawks against their former allies, as soon as they saw that the fortune of the unequal war against them, and ranged themselves on the side of the whites. After the Battle of the Bad Axe, they traced the old chief Black Hawk to his retreat, and gave him and his sons up to the Government. It is hardly necessary to repeat that the prisoners were kindly treated; the same policy which led the Government to confine the chief for a while, led it afterwards to bring him to the great cities of the West—give him his liberty, with his companions—and send him back to his humbled tribe loaded with presents.

The beauty of the river scenery, upon which I remarked as we ascended, had in the interval been, in a great measure, totally despoiled. The golden haze of the Indian summer had been scattered—the surface of the river was dark,—the sky dull, the trees robbed of their last leaf,—and the prairies on all sides, above and below, were all blackened or burning. As you glanced up the side valleys, through which the broad tributaries pour into the main river from the east and the west, the summits of the hills were half obscured by the wreaths of smoke rising from the lower grounds. Still the beauty and form of the long line of towering bluffs, which, seen in profile, often presented themselves in the form of the most graceful cones; and the brilliance of the hues of the lichen which clung to the rock, and on which no season produced a change, with much of the detail of the scenery, again excited our admiration.

Our encampment in the forests, near the Bad Axe, on the night between the 12th and 13th of November, was rendered remarkable by one circumstance.

The night was calm; the wind, which had been northerly the foregoing day, chopped about early in the morning to the south, and blew with some force with a clear sky. Early, it might be between two and three o'clock, the whole heavens became gradually covered with falling stars, increasing in number till the sky had the appearance of being filled with luminous flakes of snow. This meteoric rain continued to pour down till the light of the coming day rendered it invisible. Millions must have shone and disappeared during the course of these three or four hours. They appeared to proceed from a point in the heavens, about fourteen degrees to the south-east of the zenith, and thence fell in curved lines to every point of the compass. Whether they remained visible down to the horizon or not, we do not know. There were some in the shower of larger size than the others, but for the greater part, they appeared as stars of the first or second magnitude. Their course in falling was interrupted, like the luminous flight of the fire fly. This celestial appearance bore precisely the character of the phenomenon recorded, as having been witnessed on the 12th Nov. 1799, by Humbolt and his companion at Cumana, in South America, where the heavens appeared filled with these '*bolides*' for four entire hours in the early part of the morning; and they were subsequently discovered to have been visible simultaneously in Labrador, Greenland, and Germany,—over a space equal to 921,000 square leagues. Like that, the extent over the earth's surface, on which the meteoric shower which I am more particularly describing was observed, was extraordinarily great. At the same hour that it was visible in our camp, it was seen in equal splendour throughout the whole of the valley of the Mississippi, in all the Atlantic cities, in Canada, and in the middle of the Atlantic; how far further I am not yet able to discover.

We were fortunate, you may suppose, in enjoying for hours such a splendid and uncommon phenomenon, streaming over the river, and forests, and bluffs. Fortunate—yes, truly! what will you say, when I own that though all I have related is strictly true, not one of us saw it—having been permitted to remain prosaically sleeping within the shelter of our tent till all was over. Our Crapauds, it is true, were up and awake, and could not but notice the extraordinary appearance of the heavens, but before them hung their fathomless kettle filled to the brim; and they sat watching it simmering on the blazing logs with a philosophical insensibility to every thing else, which was extremely characteristic, though to us perfectly unaccountable. What was it to them if the stars fell from heaven, or the skies 'drizzled blood?'—that there was that passing over their heads which would make the very wolves of the forest howl as their eyes glared upwards, or urge the Indian to kneel and pray to the Great Spirit—as long as their beloved camp-kettle was unmoved, and the whiskey-keg lay undisturbed in its bed in the tangled grass, what was that to them?

As we descended the river, we found the attention of all excited by the phenomenon, and we alone, reposing in the open air, in the best possible position for observation, were not witnesses of it!

Early on the evening of this day, we returned, blithely singing our *Chanson de retour*, down the river, to the little village of Prairie de Chien, where a knot of wives, daughters, and children, awaited the return of our men; and after a few moments spent by them in the ordinary compliments, kissing, and embraces, we were conducted to the landing of the Fort, and there welcomed as old friends.

LETTER XVII.

THE period of their engagement now being at a close, our crew waited on us the following morning at the Fort, to pay their compliments and receive such monies as were still due to them. This done, they departed with vows of eternal attachment to our persons, and many assurances that for their part they had never made such an agreeable voyage in their lives—SAUF LA MISERE!

Some of them, including the fat wag, Guillaume, were straightway seized upon by the nimble claws of the sheriff's officer, and clapped into prison by their creditors, to make them disgorge and pay their debts, now that they had the means. One more on the alert, nimbly ran away with what he had secured; and the others went and danced and fiddled all night long at a Gombo-ball in the village. The only one of their number whose appearance and demeanour was that of an honest man, was Julian, and he maintained our good opinion to the last, in spite of his white face under the Maiden's Rock.

Agreeable as we found our position in the society and at the mess of the officers at Fort Crawford, there were urgent reasons why we should continue our flight to the southward. Even our hosts could not but advise us to contrive the means of escape, unless we made up our minds to accept their offer of winter-quarters. There were however, as usual, difficulties in the way. To return by land to St. Louis was neither according to our wish, nor advisable; nor indeed did it appear practicable. If we were to continue upon the water, we had no alternative but to re-engage old Demaret and his canoe, and get together another crew of rogues and cormorants. We found that these disreputable acquaintances of ours had been chuckling among themselves in the idea of our being in a trap; and, calculating upon our being ultimately reduced to make use of their paddles, they rose in their demands to a most exorbitant price. Much would have more—and knowing as we did that we had already spoiled the market for their future employers, we could not make up our minds to fall precipitately into the snare.

First, they averred that there was the *time*, then the *labour*, then the increase of *misère* from the advance of the season, the probability of *frost*, the possibility of *snow*, the certainty of outrageous *appetites;*—and lastly, even if we succeeded in reaching St. Louis unimpeded by the ice, there was the certain prospect of being prevented from returning to their homes. These were certainly serious considerations. Just in this moment, most unexpectedly and fortunately for us, a number of barges were seen emerging from the deep glen of the Ouisconsin, and turning up the Mississippi towards the Fort. They were found to contain a body of recruits for the frontier posts of St. Peter's and the Prairie, and for a regiment of dragoons forming near St. Louis. They had made their way thus far from the Atlantic States, by way of Detroit, Lake Huron, Green Bay, Fox River, and over the portage into the Ouisconsin. The two barges containing the recruits bound to St. Louis were in command of a young officer, who promptly made us an offer to join company; and the following day, the 17th of November, you may imagine us seated round a pan of charcoal in the stern of one of the boats, and pushing away from the hospitable shore of Prairie de Chien, where we left as warm-hearted a set of fine young fellows, and as staunch and brave an old Colonel as you would wish to see. The thermometer was far below the freezing point, and much as our new associates were in need of repose, they had not dared to indulge in it. I may here mention that our departure was in fact a most fortunate escape, as we heard the following summer, when we had the pleasure to meet one of our frontier friends in Philadelphia. The very night after we quitted the Prairie, the Mississippi began to close, and remained strongly frozen for four entire months;—the thermometer at the Fort ranging to 25° below zero of Fahrenheit; and at St. Peter's, the mercury continued frozen for three days consecutively.

It may also be mentioned, that the morning after we were off, certain of our trusty Crapauds came in perfect ignorance of our having escaped their net, to see how we might be inclined to fall into their terms, now that the ice in the river showed that not an instant was to be lost; and the scene of grimace and despair, when they found that we were already probably fifty miles on our course, was said to have been singularly entertaining.

We had fortunately however got the start of the winter, dropped down the current propelled by six oars in each barge; and, when the wind served, by the yet more powerful aid of square sails; and though we had to break our way out of the gathering ice for the two first mornings, yet soon after passing the Mining District, we had no longer to complain of extreme cold.

I shall not go largely into the details of our descent of six hundred miles to St. Louis, which it took us nine days to effect. Though highly entertaining to us, it would be monotonous in description. The shores of the Mississippi and the character of the channel continued to be interesting, without having an equal claim to be considered as romantic, as the upper portion of the river. Towns there were none, and the settlements were few and distant from each other, till we got within a hundred miles or so of the Missouri.

Our encampments,—for we still spread our beds every night in the forests,—continued to be the scenes of much amusement and enjoyment.

The recruits for the service of the newly-raised regiment of dragoons organizing for the future service of the frontier, in place of the Rangers, our quondam swopping acquaintances of last autumn, were distinguished from the rag-tag-and-bob-tail herd drafted into the ranks of the regular army, by being for the most part picked, athletic young men of decent character and breeding. They were all Americans, whereas the ordinary recruits consist either of the scum of the population of the older States, or of the worthless German, English, or Irish emigrants.

This is one of the disadvantages under which the military officer of the United States has to labour. The dislike to personal subordination in which the youth of the country are nurtured from childhood, and the possibility of every man who has character making his way in a more creditable manner, prevent the ranks being filled with better subjects; and degraded indeed is the class of men whom the young officer must toil to bring into sober subordination. Desertion, which is stated to prevail to the annual extent of one half of the whole army—always keeps up the call for new recruits, and the recommencement of his labours. Added to this and the frequently complete utter state of exile from good society consequent upon the service, at an age when that is absolutely necessary for the formation of the character of the young and ardent,—the post of an officer on the frontiers is by no means either an enviable, or in the idea of many of his fellow-citizens, an honourable one. The jealousy and suspicion with which even this skeleton of a regular army is regarded by the American people, renders his position difficult in many ways. West Point Academy, from the pupils of which they must draw the few scientific officers they possess, is looked upon with mistrust, as nursing a young brood of aristocrats,—and the arrangements of the war-office attached to the general Government, wherever they come in collision with the civil arrangements of the individual States, is regarded with equal dislike. The officer on the frontiers is now called to defend the Indian against the citizen, and then to protect the citizen against the Indian; and in enforcing the orders of the executive against the encroachments and nefarious dealings of the loose inhabitant of the boundary, he is sure to win the hatred of the latter, who, as a citizen, will always meet with a sympathy, which, however just the cause, will rarely be accorded to the officer. The consequence is, that he is frequently involved personally in the most vexatious suits with the State Jurisdictions, by the execution of orders from his superior; and strange to say, though a refusal on the part of an officer to act, would of course subject him to military pains and penalties—the general Government does not appear either ready or able to protect him from civil pains and penalties inflicted by the State, because in obeying orders received, her laws may have been infringed.

The Navy is the nation's pet. However jealous of the most distant appearance of despotic rule ashore—

no one has hitherto interfered with the regulations of that service, though necessarily despotic and beyond all control. Yet with the Army it is otherwise, and if in the exercise of a just authority and discipline, without which government is null and void, an irreclaimable fellow gets his deserts—it is much if the appeal he may make to his fellow-citizens of the Union, does not raise a sympathetic yell of indignation from Maine to Florida. If there is any truth in the insight we have had into the nature of the present military service of the United States, we might well deem the officers to be just so many clever, gentlemanly men lost to society.

The embryo dragoons were about thirty in number, and, with ourselves, occupied seven tents, which were pitched the instant the place of rest was determined upon. There was a far greater degree of discipline maintained by the spirited young Lieutenant who had them in charge, than we had seen among the Rangers, and all being carried on with method, half-a-dozen axes soon felled the necessary trees—the camp fires were built—the tents raised; and, before an hour had gone by, the cooks announced supper. The art of building a real backwoodman's winter fire, is, like most other accomplishments, not learnt without experience. The practised hunter or soldier know exactly what trees are fitted for his purpose—which are the best calculated to burn freely, and to produce a fine clear hard charcoal; and he will never throw away the labour of his axe, as you or I might do, upon one that is not exactly fitted for his purpose.

The Frenchman goes hopping about among the dry branches on the ground, gathers a handful or two, blows up a little miserable fire which just suffices to cook his supper, and will send him shuffling forth to fetch more wood every half-hour: but not so the backwoodsman—he looks to the wind, and fixes upon the exact spot and 'lay' of his future camp. He takes his axe, glances knowingly up at the tall trees, and sets confidently to work. The power of the American axe, and the skill with which it is wielded, may well excite the admiration of a European. The weapon itself is no more to be compared to the vile chopper commonly seen in the hands of one of our woodmen, than a gimblet can be compared with a centre-bit. It is formed upon a different principle—the handle is set far forward, and it acts upon the tree, more from the wedge-like form, its own weight, and the skilful swing which gives it impetus, than from any great exertion of strength on the part of the woodman. In fact, sleight more than strength is employed in its use. The rapidity with which the huge trees of the forest fall before a single pair of well-swung axes is really marvèllous; and the axe may rank with maize and steam as one of the three things which have conquered the Western World. But to our camp-fire: suppose the tree so felled as to fall in a line with the wind, cleared of the branches and the top, this will be called the back-log. The woodman then prepares two shorter lengths, from the same or another tree, of perhaps three feet in length, which he places at right angles, in advance of the main log, about two yards apart. They serve for dogs or hand-irons, and upon these in front another huge log of some close-grained wood is in due time placed parallel and nearly in contact with the back-log; the narrow gap between being filled with lighter wood. This is called the fore-stick. A camp-fire so constructed will last through a long winter's night, with an occasional addition of a few sticks, of which a heap is always collected and at hand, to be thrown every few hours into the gap, which, fanned by the air passing in under the fore-stick, becomes heaped with glowing charcoal. The heat of a fire so constructed is very great, as we know well, for sometimes we were almost roasted in our tents. The latter are generally pitched in front, a few feet from the fore-stick, and if the wind remain steady, the smoke will all night long be driven off in such a direction as to leave you in good humour.

The night scene was sometimes most singlarly picturesque, as we lay in the thick forest on the shore, or in the islands, with the blazing fires and white tents —the groups—and the trees glowing like vermillion in the darkness. There was one where we built the fires amid a group of gigantic sycamores, lying prostrate from the effects of some terrific hurricane, round which the men looked like pigmies, which certainly surpassed any night scene ever painted.

The men were a merry set, looking forward to the future possession of their horses, arms, and regimentals with considerable self-complacency; and many a song then echoed through the hoar forests for the first time; some of the most approved, such as '*The hunters of Kentucky*' or '*O 'tis my delight in a stormy night in the season of the year*,' became from their frequent repetition almost a nuisance. For my own part, I can truly say, that, whether it is that there is any gypsy blood in our veins or not, concerning which tradition and genealogy are silent—late and leafless as the year was, I enjoyed these nights in the forests to the very last.

During the day, our gradual progress was far from being unaccompanied by interest; the scenery of the Mississippi—constant speculation with regard to our course,—for not one of the whole party had ever descended the river—and the number of diverging channels,—the islands, sand-banks, and other details, kept us more or less on the alert.

Then came the close of day—the choice of a camp—our quiet and cheerful mess with the two officers, and sweet repose during the long hours of darkness. It is true, we had no more the song of the birds, or the hum of nocturnal insects; and nature seemed dead around us. But it was delicious to steal out in the night for a moment, and stand over the sleeping camp—and see the stars shining brightly on the sleepless river. And especially before dawn, when the waning of the night was shown by the altered position of the great constellations from the SE. to the SW. and the stars of Orion's Belt declined till they became parallel with the horizon,—the scene presented to our waking eyes was still impressively beautiful. There was the first dawn--the pale colouring of the sky, and the fleecy clouds which dappled but did not obscure the heavens, —the brightening surface of the mighty river, and the uprising of the sun. How singularly indifferent we get to some of the greatest beauties of God's creation!

Day went after day, and night after night,—one vast reach of the river was passed after another, and innumerable islands, and clearsand-bars, many of which were whitened with swans. We counted one hundred and seven in a single flight. The mouth of one wide tributary after another was descried and passed. The River was full, and we passed down the lesser Rapids without observing them. The second line of Rapids lie above Rock River, where at Fort Armstrong, we spent a most agreeable day, at the warm instance of the hospitable Colonel and his lady, and gleaned again fresh proofs of the unfeigned kindness and gentle bearing of the United States' officers, wherever you meet with them.

The position of this little Fort is remarkable, occupying the rocky extremity of an island three miles long, and of half that width. It forms a square, with blockhouses at the angles, two of which, impending over the limestone precipice, are picturesque objects. On the western bank of the Mississippi, extending to the southward, the Sauks and Foxes have their Reservation. A few settlements appeared scattered in this neighbourhood on the eastern shores, but still for some time in proceeding—indeed till we passed the De Moyen Rapids, down which we were hurried at the rate of many miles an hour—we seemed to be in the wilderness.

At the termination of the fourth day after we quitted Rock Island, many reasons impelled us to wish that we might reach St. Louis on the following; and, as the night was calm, and a bright round moon favoured us, it was arranged that we should float all night. This we did, and on landing for breakfast at early dawn, we discovered, to our great astonishment, that we had made a nocturnal advance of nearly fifty miles, and were already far below the mouth of the Illinois River and the town of Alton,—in fact within twenty miles of our port. There was yet one spectacle intervening, towards which we had looked forward with no inconsiderable interest, and that was the junction of the Mississippi with its vast tributary the Missouri; and we had hardly proceeded a couple of miles before the low shores receding to the westward warned us of the vicinity of the latter river. The Mississippi, as though in pride to welcome its competitor, spread his clear waters over a vast extent of surface. By degrees the cotton-wood plantations which bordered the western shore, were observed to be receding far into the perspective,—the even current of the parent stream became checked,—its surface agitated;—then the boat glided suddenly from the clear water into a turbid yellow stream in which the mud could be seen boiling from below, and we were in the Missouri. The first irruption of the turbid current of this great river upon the Mississippi,, carries it completely across the vast bed of the other. The Missouri then in a manner which was perfectly unaccountable to us, but perhaps caused by the far greater density of its water, disappears for nearly ten miles. The surface of the river showed little or no token of the adulteration of the current, and it was not till we got below the islands, and within a few miles of St. Louis, that we observed the two rivers, distinguishable from their difference of colour, flowing for a while distinctly side by side, till in fine, mingling their waters, they form one immense torrent. Well might the Indians tell Father Marquette, that there was a 'maritou'. or spirit below the Missouri, which would let few pass with life.

Thus two months had seen us achieve what we had planned, with satisfaction to ourselves, and we gave thanks to God, whose providence had been our safeguard and our stay.

LETTER XVIII.

Ten days were suffered to elapse after our return to St. Louis, before we pursued our voyage down the Mississippi. In my notice of the preceding year, I gave you a hint of there being a certain degree of danger attendant upon the steam-boat navigation on the rivers of the West, and of the causes thereof; and you will easily comprehend that in making choice of a boat for our descent of upwards of a thousand miles, we acted with as much circumspection as lay in our power. The arrival of the Missourian, which had been long expected, gave us the opportunity of taking our berths on board a boat which was distinguished for its good character and good government beyond most of its competitors, and about the close of the first week in December, we left St. Louis. The state of the stream was favourable to its navigation. One wide reach of the Great River was passed after another—towns and villages appeared and disappeared on the shores—we marked the junction of each great tributary in succession—we renewed our acquaintance with the characteristic phenomena of the Great River, its majestic bends and forests of cotton-wood, sand-bars, islands, turbid and boiling waters, their snags and sawyers;—one day followed another, and each evening we might recount a great and uniform advance. The climate became more genial, and we seemed at length to overtake the laggard autumn.

The second day had seen us at the mouth of the Ohio; the morning of the seventh,—a thousand miles from our starting point, under the high bluffs, on which lie the rude remains of Fort St. Rosalie, and abreast of the city of Natchez. Thus far had our voyage been effected in perfect safety; and in bidding our fellow-passengers farewell, as the boat touched the pier for a few minutes to set us on shore in pursuance of our project to make a halt of a few days in the neighbourhood of this city, we had no reason to doubt the safe progress of the Missourian on her passage of three hundred miles to her destination at New Orleans. But we were not yet aware how much cause we had to bless the protecting hand of a merciful God, which had been so frequently and so signally our defence from harm; and you may judge of our surprise and sorrow, when, a few hours after we landed, we learned from a steam-boat which touched at Natchez in ascending, that hardly an hour after we had quitted the Missourian, she had been blown up a few miles below, by the collapse of her boilers, and that several lives were lost, besides many wounded. In brief, on our arrival at New Orleans, some days after, we found that seven of our fellow-passengers were dead, and six badly wounded; and the distress endured by the survivors during the remainder of the voyage, in the midst of the shattered boat, with the dead and dying around them, is not easy to conceive. In addition to this, an accidental fire broke out on board of her a few days after her arrival in port, and she was burnt to the water's edge.

I do not think that in the details I might give you of our stay at Natchez, and in its vicinity, I should add to your information. The description of cotton growing, and of the maintenance of a slave plantation, is familiar to all the world.

Suppose us therefore safely arrived at New Orleans before the close of the year.

In this remarkable city we were detained a month; I say detained, because our curiosity was soon sated with its motley scenes, and we were anxious once more to reach a piece of dry solid ground. Well may New Orleans be called the 'Wet Grave.' With a thermometer between 70° and 80°, and a constant drizzle, the surrounding country was a sheet of water; the streets were full of mud oozing up from the pavement, and it was a penance to be within its thick and unwholesome atmosphere. The last hours of December, an impenetrable mist rested on the city, through which frequent flashes of lightning glimmered portentously; — then came a terrific storm ushering in the New Year, but with no abatement of the heat, till the ensuing night, when the thermometer fell below the freezing point.

Three days after the country was covered with snow, and many miserable wretches were found dead in the streets, and under the porticoes. It continued freezing for four days, when the atmosphere again regained the former degree of heat. Such a chaos of mud can hardly be conceived.

What would you have me describe?—the ancient part of the city, its narrow streets, French and Spanish-built houses, with their showy coloured stuccoes, and iron balconies,—or the numerous Faubourgs, with their spacious pavements and tall ranges of handsome buildings? Would you look upon the square of the Cathedral, whitewashed and weather-stained without, and dusty within; the public edifices; the immense buildings erected by private companies for the pressing and warehousing of the produce of the cotton plantations? Or would you peep in upon the varieties of the human race which crowd every avenue, and swarm along the levees? Were I to make choice of a spot, from the scenes passing upon or within sight of which you would glean the most vivid idea of the characteristic features of this strange city, I should lead you to the levee in front of the square of the Cathedral, and bid you post yourself for an hour in the vicinity of the markets.

New Orleans is erected upon the outer circumference of a grand bend of the river, and the port appears to be almost land-locked. The lower end of the square is open to the levee and the river, whose margin appears lined for upwards of two miles with ships and boats of every size as close as they can float. Highest up the stream lie the flats, arks, and barges, and below them the tier of steam-boats, fifty of which may be seen lying here at one time. Then come the brigs ranged in rows, with their bows against the breast of the levee; these are succeeded by the three-masters, lying in tiers of two or three deep, with their broadside to the shore, and the scene presented by the whole margin of the river as you look down upon it from the levee, or from the roof of Bishop's Hotel in a sunny morning after a night of storm, when the sails of the whole are exposed to the air, and their signals or national flags abroad, is one of the most singularly beautiful you can conceive.

I have particularized the extended embankment or levee which protects the city from the rise of the waters of the Mississippi, as the loading and unloading of the numerous vessels, the continued passage of the people upon the elevated causeway which it furnishes, and the contiguity of the two markets with the Square, render its vicinity by far the most lively in the city.

The new market is built on the platform—while the old, with singularly-disposed columns, near the Tower of the Water-works, lies further down and beneath its level. Here, amidst a *melée* of all classes and costumes—French, Spaniards, Americans, Creoles, Quadroons, Mulattoes, Mexicans, Negroes,—you may note a double row of petty merchants, disposed along the more open part of the levee, while paving stones, masses of marble and granite coping stones, piles of timber and bricks, log-wood, coffee, sugar, corn and wheat, beef and pork, and mountains of cotton fill up the intervals. Here you see fruit stalls loaded with the produce of the tropics,—bananas, plantains, cocoa and peccan nuts, oranges and pines; there, piles of butcher's meat and venison,—fish laid out upon clean fresh palmetto leaves,—eggs wrapped up in Spanish moss,—or lines of seed-sellers with their neat little packets arranged before them on a yellow mat. The Babel of languages is highly diverting, as well as the odd mixture of names appended over the neighbouring shops. At every step you meet with something to catch the attention of a curious or idle man.

Here you note a cluster of mulatto women, sitting with kerchiefed heads and comfortable rabbit skin shawls folded round their persons, before the mats which display their various articles of traffic to the passenger—there a group of insurgent market-women tossing their empty baskets at one another, or pale-faced quadroon girls half veiled, followed by their duennas. On one side advances a negro, feathered from head to foot by the live turkies hung upon his person; on the other, a string of mules, or a mulatto driving his dray in the primeval position of a Greek charioteer. Then comes a party of half-a-dozen coloured people, clothed in the brightest hues imaginable, seated with knees and chins in contact, in a car drawn by a single old horse boring its way through the press, or a grey-haired negro going home with his christmas dinner, consisting of a fat hen and a string of onions, and grinning with delight from ear to ear. Nor will you fail to mark with astonishment the hubbub of voices and tongues broken in upon by that most indescribable of all joyous sounds, the negro's laugh.

In the midst of this crowd there was one little cluster of human beings, posted a little apart from the main thoroughfare, which for several days drew my attention and caught my sympathies more than any other. It was a solitary Indian family of the Chocktaw tribe, consisting of a mother and several female children, together with a youth on the verge of manhood. They had come down the river in a small canoe which lay moored in among the shipping, with a petty cargo of coarse basket-work which they were attempting to dispose of. The mother sat on a mat surrounded by her little store and occupied with the cares of her restless progeny; while her son, clad in blanket and bright scarlet leggings, lounged against a neighbouring pillar with the graceful posture but vacant eye of his race. Every thing about all their little contrivances spoke to my memory of the Forest and Prairie, of the pleasant lives we had led there, of friends we had there communed with, but should probably never see again; and more than all, of the desolate fortunes of their race—now strangers in their own land—and craving food from the hands of the alien!

But, my dear F, the limit which I had set to myself for this series of letters to you has come. The winter is over, the Spring is here, and I have to a certain degree fulfilled my pledge and my promise—would that it had been better done!

The second week in January, 1834, I accompanied my trusty comrade, Count Pourtales, and Mr. M'Euen, who still faithfully kept us company, on board the Golette Halcyon, bound from New Orleans to the port of Tampico in Mexico. At sun-set we were taken in tow by the high-pressure steam tow-boat Porpoise, together with a ship bound for Europe, and yet another vessel of like burden with ourselves; and, in the gripe of our powerful neighbour, like a covey of partridges in the talons of an eagle, we were borne swiftly down the river, and before morning found ourselves anchoring off the Balize light-house, with disagreeable stormy weather. Twenty-four hours then hardly sufficed to get the little crowded vessel into sailing trim, such was the disorderly and hampered state of her decks; and when in fine on the morning of Jan. 15th, we crossed the Bar, and lost sight of the low mud-shoals of the river, we little thought what trials were in store for us ere we should again set foot on dry land. 'The Halcyon!'—never was there such a complete misnomer. The epithet of 'the Raven,' would have better suited our vessel than that which she bore.

But what our fortunes were it is not my purpose to relate at this time. Long after we had lost sight of the low coast, the turbid waters heaving around us, told that we were still within the domain and the influence of the Mississippi. At length we shot over a line, clearly defined and distinct,—passed from a yellow wave into one of a sea-green hue—bade adieu to the mighty 'Father of Waters,' and, heading a point or two nearer the wind, held our course towards the western extremity of the Gulf.

THE END.